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DE QUINCEY'S COLLECTED WRITINGS

NEW AND ENLARGED EDITION

IN FOURTEEN VOLUMES

DE QUINCEY FAMILY GROUP.

(1855.)

From chalk drawing by James Archer, R.S.A.

In the possession of Mrs. F. Baird Smith.

THE COLLECTED WRITINGS

OF

THOMAS DE QUINCEY

NEW AND ENLARGED EDITION

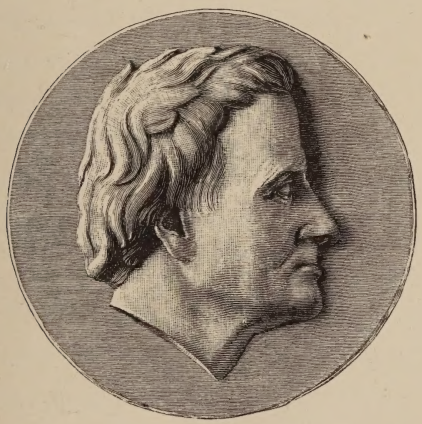
BY

DAVID MASSON,

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

VOL. I

AUTOBIOGRAPHY FROM 1785 TO 1803



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ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK
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GENERAL PREFACE BY THE EDITOR

It was in 1852 that De Quincey, who was then sixty-seven years of age, and had been resident in or near Edinburgh through the preceding five-and-twenty years, began the preparation of a collective edition of his writings, to be published by the Edinburgh house of Mr. James Hogg. The scheme of such a collective edition had been anticipated by the American publishing firm of Messrs. Ticknor and Fields of Boston. A volume or two of their American edition had already appeared when De Quincey undertook the British edition.

The undertaking was a serious one for a man of De Quincey's age and habits. The very peculiarity of his literary life, it has to be remembered, distinguishing him from most of his literary contemporaries of any comparable importance, was that his writings had been, with hardly an exception, in the one form of fugitive contributions to magazines and other

periodicals. His *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* had, indeed, been published in London in small book-form in 1822, after having become famous in their original magazine form in the previous year, and the small book had been five times reprinted; his little romance called *Klosterheim, or The Masque*, had been published by itself in 1839 by Messrs. Blackwood of Edinburgh; and the same publishers had issued in 1844 his volume entitled *Logic of Political Economy*. With these exceptions, however, the first and the last more apparent than real, it was as a writer of articles, and not of books, that De Quincey had made his mark in the literature of his generation. That, under such a disadvantage of method, as it might generally be considered, he had made so very strong a mark, and had been recognised long before his death as indubitably an English classic, and a classic of a high and rare order, is a phenomenon of a rather uncommon sort in English literary history, though examples of the like may be found among the French. While it is to be accounted for in the main by the intrinsic excellence, the peculiarly original quality, of those articles which De Quincey scattered about so profusely in so many directions, something is due to the fact that they had not to contend with the particular additional disadvantage, ordinary in such cases, of being altogether anonymous. Many of them bore De Quincey's name, or its equivalent, "The English Opium-Eater"; and, even when this was omitted, the paternity of a paper of his was seldom in doubt. Not the less, when, in De Quincey's latest years, the certificate that he had taken rank as an English classic came in so unmistakable a form as a demand on both sides of the Atlantic for a collective edition of his writings, was the mere search for the dispersed writings, the mere getting of them together, a preliminary difficulty. The difficulty was actually greater in De Quincey's own case, when he undertook the collective Edinburgh edition, than it was in the case of the Transatlantic publisher, Mr. Fields, who had undertaken the collective American edition. Had De Quincey been as most other mortals of the writing tribe are, he would have had copies of all his articles lying beside him, bound in orderly volumes, or at least tied up in bundles; and on these preserved volumes or bundles he would have

operated easily enough. But they know little of De Quincey who can connect him with any such imagination of orderliness, or the use of red-tape for the custody of even his most precious possessions. De Quincey, the feeblest and most helpless of little sexagenarian gentlemen at the time when he was called upon to prepare the collective Edinburgh issue of his writings,—De Quincey, all his life the most incredibly eccentric and incalculable of human beings,—De Quincey, the shifter in many previous years from lodging to lodging, the burrower even in hiding-holes, each new lodging or hiding-hole plugged in its turn with a chaos of books and papers, amid which the little man sat and worked, ruefully recollecting all the while that he had left unknown deposits of books and papers, in tea-chests and band-boxes, in some of those previous lodgings and hiding-holes the landladies of which he dared not go near and dreaded visits from,—could any one think it possible that, even in that convenient cottage-retreat of his, near Edinburgh, which had of late been the fixed home of himself and his family, De Quincey should contrive to procure the complete collection of his magazine articles for which Mr. Hogg was waiting? True, as his memory was tenacious, he might have written out a list of the articles in the chronological order of their appearance, or in any other order, with references to the periodicals in which they appeared, and so have deputed to Mr. Hogg the hunt for the necessary volumes and back numbers of magazines, etc., at book sales or in libraries. It was in this way, in fact, that Mr. Fields was proceeding with the American edition at Boston. He was picking out gradually, from the old volumes of British magazines and other periodicals to which De Quincey had contributed, those papers which bore De Quincey's name, or those which, from internal evidence, without that authentication, he could judge to be De Quincey's,—appeal to De Quincey himself by letter an obvious method in reserve for doubtful cases. What was thus comparatively easy in Boston was not so easy, however, in Edinburgh, where it was not Mr. Hogg only that had to be satisfied, but De Quincey himself also. A mere reprint of the articles as they stood in the old pages and columns of their original publication, just as these could be procured,

might have sufficed for Mr. Hogg, but could not suffice for De Quincey. To the task of mere collection there had to be added, for his satisfaction, the task of suitable arrangement. Was the arrangement to be chronological,—each paper, whatever its kind, to be placed by the date of its original appearance; or would it be better to attempt some classification of the papers according to their subjects and kinds? On either plan there were special difficulties; but it was pretty obvious that De Quincey would have to adopt the more difficult of the two. The merely chronological plan,—which was the plan adopted by Carlyle for the edition of his Miscellaneous Essays,—would not suit for an array of material so extensive and of such varied character as De Quincey had to manipulate. But, that question supposed to be settled, and the material supposed to have been all brought together, there was the prospect of further labour in the revision of the articles individually. Some of the articles, having been hurriedly written, or hurriedly wound up on pressure from the printers, actually required revision; and, even where there was no such necessity, it was not in De Quincey's nature to let any old paper of his go forth without revision, and even fastidious revision. He would retrench here, and amplify there; he would insert notes and afterthoughts; he would retouch the phraseology throughout. So certain was this from knowledge of his literary habits, that Mr. Hogg must have foreseen continual chances of delay and dislocation, if not of total break-down, from this cause alone. Finally, had not De Quincey papers beside him, finished or unfinished, that had not yet been published anywhere; and, as the issue of the successive volumes of the collective edition was sure to extend over several years, was he not likely, in the course of those years, to furnish a good deal of new matter that would have to be incorporated? For this contingency also, complicating all the rest, there had to be provision.

The preliminary difficulty of merely getting together the matter on which De Quincey was to operate, though it would have been absolutely insuperable for De Quincey himself, would have been nothing very formidable with Mr. Hogg's assistance. All that was necessary was to procure, and deposit at De Quincey's feet, a complete set of the volumes

of periodicals and other miscellanies in which, during the preceding thirty-one years or thereabouts, his available articles, to the number of about a hundred and fifty in all, had successively appeared. *The London Magazine*, from 1821 to the end of 1824; *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, from 1826 to 1849; *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, from 1834 to 1851: to these, as the principal repositories of the articles required, let there have been added the volumes for the letters G, P, and S in the seventh edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, published between 1827 and 1842, together with the *North British Review* for the single year 1848, and perhaps a stray volume or two of such long-defunct periodicals as *Knight's Quarterly Magazine* (London, 1823-4) and *The Edinburgh Literary Gazette* (an abortive Edinburgh weekly of 1829-1830); and the collection would have been perfect. No, not quite, unless De Quincey had kept beside him copies of the numbers of that other Edinburgh periodical for which he had been writing most recently of all, and for which he was still writing when the project of the collective edition began to occupy his thoughts. This was *Hogg's Instructor*, a cheap weekly, which had been started in 1845 by the Mr. James Hogg who was now connected with De Quincey as the intending publisher of the collective edition. The connexion had, in fact, grown out of an offer of De Quincey to contribute to Mr. Hogg's weekly. His first article there had appeared in 1850; and in one of the numbers for 1851, the most conspicuous decoration of which was an engraved portrait of De Quincey, there was printed, in addition to a whimsical letter of De Quincey's in criticism of the portrait, the first of a series of articles from his pen under the title of "A Sketch from Childhood." This series of new autobiographic articles, a supplement to the large quantity of autobiographic revelation that De Quincey had already given to the world, was still running in the pages of *Hogg's Instructor* at intervals through 1852, at the very time when De Quincey was concocting the first volume of the forthcoming collective edition.

I cannot doubt that it was this fact of the concurrence of the new series of autobiographic articles with De Quincey's requisite ruminations for the forthcoming collective edition of

his writings that determined the composition of the first volume of that edition. As he was working in the element of autobiography at any rate, and was engaged more particularly with the earlier portions of his autobiography, why not start the collective edition with an Autobiographic volume? In that case a recast of the very articles which he had written, or was writing, for *Hogg's Instructor* would serve for the beginning of the volume; after which he could revise and work in the necessary additional material from *Tait* and *Blackwood*. This, accordingly, is what he did; and, fortunately, while he was engaged in the process, there came a relief for him, and for Mr. Hogg, from all further trouble in the mere business of getting together the material for the collective edition as a whole. Mr. Fields of Boston, proceeding quietly with the American edition on the mere principle of reprinting De Quincey's papers from the various periodicals in which they had originally appeared, had by this time got ready twelve volumes of the reprint; an arrangement had handsomely been made by Messrs. Ticknor and Fields with De Quincey, by which, in return for his authorising the American edition, he was to have a share of the profits; and, though De Quincey was to proceed with the Edinburgh edition independently, on his own different principle of recast, revision, and re-arrangement, his labour was to be facilitated thenceforth by his having the volumes of the American edition, published or yet to be published, for his basis. Such was the position of affairs when, in 1853, there did appear the First Volume of the Edinburgh Collective Edition. The general title under which the edition was then announced was SELECTIONS, GRAVE AND GAY, FROM WRITINGS, PUBLISHED AND UNPUBLISHED, OF THOMAS DE QUINCEY, REVISED AND ARRANGED BY HIMSELF; and the title of the first volume was *Autobiographic Sketches*.

The prosecution of the editorial labour to which De Quincey had thus committed himself in 1853 was all but his sole occupation thenceforward. He did indeed continue to contribute occasional new articles to *Hogg's Instructor*, both while it retained that name and also after it had been transmuted into an Edinburgh monthly under the more ambitious name of *Titan*. Now and then, also, Mr. Hogg dreaded

interruption to the collective edition from new and incompatible projects which De Quincey would gravely announce, one of them being a History of England in twelve volumes. On the whole, however, the business of revising and recasting portion after portion of the material provided in the American edition did go on with sufficient regularity, at the outset at least, for Mr. Hogg's purpose. To Volume I, issued, as has been said, in 1853, there succeeded, in the first half of 1854, Volumes II and III, the three volumes together launching the edition successfully, and making a very fair beginning.

It may be well that the reader should understand a little more particularly, at this point, the circumstances of De Quincey during the progress of his undertaking. The time, as has been said, was from 1852 onwards ; and the place, as has also been explained in a general way, was mainly Edinburgh. In this matter of place, however, it is desirable now that the reader's conception should be more precise.

Seven miles out of Edinburgh, a little beyond the village of Lasswade, on the slope of a country bye-road which descends steeply to the picturesque banks of the well-wooded Esk river, near Polton Mills, stands a cottage formerly known as Mavis Bush Cottage, but now aggrandised in guide-books into De Quincey Cottage, or even De Quincey Villa, in recollection of the fact that De Quincey was for a good while its tenant. It is an elegant enough little rustic cottage, of eight rooms, with something of a garden at the back and pretty surroundings. It had been taken by De Quincey in 1840, three years after he had become a widower, as a residence for his six surviving children, and for himself when he could be with them. For the subsequent nine years or so *that* had been possible only now and then,—the hard exigencies of his literary mode of livelihood requiring, or seeming to require, detention in Edinburgh itself, where he could have access to books, with the change of an occasional visit to Glasgow, where he could have the same convenience. Latterly, however, he had been drawn back to the Lasswade cottage more frequently, and for longer periods of stay ; and since 1849,—by which time his three sons had gone out into the world in different occupations

(the eldest of whom had died in China), so that there had been left in the cottage his three daughters only,—his fatherly presence in the cottage, in the society of these daughters, and under their affectionate domestic charge, had been habitual and all but constant. In fact, from that year onwards it was only at the Lasswade cottage, seven miles out of Edinburgh, that Mr. De Quincey was understood to be at home for visitors that brought introductions to him, or had formal business with him; and here it was that, in 1852, he did receive some distinguished visitors who have left printed reminiscences of him,—*e.g.* the Rev. Francis Jacox, Miss Harriet Martineau, and his American publisher and editor, Mr. Fields. Here it was, accordingly, in the same year, and while he was receiving some of these distinguished guests, that there had come upon him Mr. Hogg's project of a Collective Edinburgh Edition of his writings, to be independent of the American Edition; and here it was that he managed, as we have seen, to send to the press the first three volumes of the work,—Vol. I in 1853, and Vols. II and III in 1854.——Precisely at this point, however, there was an important change in De Quincey's domiciliary arrangements. The distance of the Lasswade cottage from Edinburgh, short though it was, had been found inconvenient for the passage of manuscripts and proofs between him and the printing-office; and this,—concurring with a break in the little Lasswade household itself, which had been caused at any rate by the recent marriage of his eldest daughter, her departure with her husband to Ireland, and a consequent invitation to her two sisters to visit her there,—had determined De Quincey on one more experiment of life by himself in Edinburgh lodgings. Now, it so happened that, of all his many previous experiments of this kind, none had left such satisfactory recollections as that which he had tried for a while, between 1838 and 1840, in certain lodgings kept by a widowed Mrs. Wilson and her sister Miss Stark. They were in a half-flat set of apartments on the second floor of No. 42 Lothian Street, a house of six such half-flats in all, accessible by a common stair on one of the sides of a somewhat dingy thoroughfare of oldish shops and dwelling-houses, in the Old Town, near the University.

Mrs. Wilson and Miss Stark were two most respectable and conscientious persons, of superior tastes and abilities, who had come to have some knowledge of the character and pursuits of their extraordinary little gentleman-lodger during his former stay with them, remembered him with respect, and had, in fact, been carefully keeping for him, in case he should turn up again, some small chattels of his, in the shape of wearing apparel, which he had left as waifs in their rooms. And now, some day in May or June 1854, he did turn up again, with the result that they were to have the main charge of him for all the rest of his days, and that those rooms, in one of the half-flats on the third floor of No. 42 Lothian Street, were to be his permanent abode and workshop thenceforward, whether for the future volumes of the Collective Edition or for any other literary labour. A tablet has been recently affixed to the wall of the house, marking the windows of the apartments which De Quincey occupied, and signifying to passers-by that this is the one house in all Edinburgh most interesting now from its associations with De Quincey.——Not that the cottage at Lasswade was quite forsaken. No sooner were his two unmarried daughters back from their Irish visit than his walk was as often as possible from his Lothian Street workshop to the Lasswade home ; and even after 1855, when the elder of them went out to India to become the wife of Major Baird Smith, of the Bengal Engineers (afterwards the Colonel Baird Smith so famous for his exertions in the Indian Mutiny), his footsteps would still be to Lasswade as often as the one remaining daughter chanced to be there, and not, as was naturally most frequent thenceforth, with her eldest married sister in Ireland. So long, indeed, as the tie to Lasswade lasted, the continued relations of De Quincey to that village may be described by saying that it was always at the Lasswade cottage that he was to be found when he was not in No. 42 Lothian Street, and always in No. 42 Lothian Street when he was not at the Lasswade cottage. The walk of seven miles between the two places was, so long as there was occasion, his most customary exercise.

To condense the story of De Quincey's editorial labours from 1854 onwards, it may be mentioned that a fourth

volume of the Collective Edition appeared in that year, but that then there was a break,—Vol. V not appearing till 1856, to be followed in 1857 by Vols. VI and VII; after which the rate of issue became more rapid, the rest coming out, as it were, in a subsequent crush. Each volume in its turn, one can see, was a work of weary groaning for De Quincey, and of struggle between him and the printers. What with his constant ill health and now increasing feebleness, what with his extreme fastidiousness in workmanship, what with the retarding effects of occasional excesses still in his habitual indulgence in opium,—effects not manifesting themselves now, however, in any such agonies and horrors of opium-nightmare as those that had prostrated him in certain years of his previous life, but only in a kind of gentle and dreamy somnolence,—his progress could not but be intermittent. Add that, by the gradual breaking up of the Lasswade household, the old man had been left much more than in recent years to that incurable habit of shy solitariness which had been his life-long characteristic, and the conception of which to its extreme extent is almost a definition of De Quincey. Totally free though he now was from those pecuniary cares which had harassed the latter part of his life at the Lakes, his subsequent experiment of life in London, and that long portion of his Edinburgh life which he had now left behind him, and the story of which, with all its shifts and miseries, can never be authentically told in this world, he was yet the same creature of dark corners, evasive of the element around him, that he had always been. After nearly thirty years of residence in Edinburgh, he still moved about in the town, with furtive footsteps, no less the little English alien than he had been when he first came into it by adventure. To the few who had attained to something like intimacy with him, and to whom, in their inexpressible admiration of his abilities and their love of his gentle ways, "an evening with De Quincey" was the highest of possible pleasures, the pleasure was possible only by elaborate stratagem. The perfection of ornate politeness and courtesy, as well as of sage delightfulness in talk, when any of them did contrive to lure him into company, or took him unawares by a morning call, he

preferred being shut up by himself all day and every day in his own crib in Lothian Street, with the variation only of an afternoon ramble, or a late nocturnal ramble, still all by himself, through certain purlieus and suburbs. The greatest break in this monotony of his habits, after the blank that had been left for him in the old home at Lasswade, was in the year 1857. In the autumn of that year, his youngest son having come home on a short furlough from his regiment in India, he allowed himself, though then seventy-two years of age, to be taken, in the company of this son and of his youngest daughter, on a journey to Ireland, for the pleasure of visiting his eldest married daughter, and seeing his infant grandchildren in their Irish surroundings. Back in Edinburgh, with a treasure of affectionate recollections from this visit, he resumed his usual habits, and persevered in his editorial labour for two years more. Then came the end. The thirteenth volume of the Collective Edinburgh Edition of his writings had been published when, towards the close of 1859, it became evident that he was done with that undertaking and with all his other worldly concerns. On Thursday the 8th of December 1859, in the presence of two of his daughters,—the only two of his children within reach of a summons,—he died peacefully in his Lothian Street lodging, aged seventy-four years and four months; and a few days afterwards he was buried in that grave of his, in a quiet nook in St. Cuthbert's churchyard, at the west end of Princes Street, under the Castle Rock, which is now visited sometimes by residents in Edinburgh or by tourists, and over which there is a humble monument to his memory. In 1860 there was the posthumous publication of a fourteenth volume of his collective writings, composed from his latest preparations.

The American collective edition of Messrs. Ticknor and Fields, begun in 1851, had meanwhile reached its twenty-second and concluding volume, providing for Transatlantic readers something like a complete De Quincey before there was similar provision for British readers in Mr. Hogg's collective Edinburgh edition of 1853-1860 in fourteen volumes. Moreover, while the Edinburgh edition had the distinct advantage of having been conducted by De Quincey

himself, and so containing his latest corrections and additions, the American edition had the counterbalancing advantage of containing reprints of articles of De Quincey that had not been included in the Edinburgh edition, probably because De Quincey had not lived long enough to overtake them. To a very considerable extent, this defect was remedied, after the Edinburgh edition had passed into the hands of its present proprietors, by the publication in 1863 of a fifteenth volume, and then in 1871 of a sixteenth, both consisting of important additional matter recovered from the original repositories or from his surviving manuscripts. Even the sixteen-volume edition which has thus been accessible to the British public since 1871 hardly fulfils, however, what may now be the general desire for a complete De Quincey. In the particular of completeness it does not quite match the American edition in the latest form which that edition has been able to assume by successive improvements of itself, due mainly to judicious borrowings and incorporations from the British edition. By such successive improvements the original American edition of Messrs. Ticknor and Fields in two-and-twenty small volumes has been superseded for some time by what is called the Riverside Press Edition, consisting of twelve thick volumes, issued by Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin, and Co., the successors of Messrs. Ticknor and Fields in the Boston publishing business. As it is time that De Quincey's countrymen of the British Islands should be able to possess, if they choose, an edition of De Quincey even more perfect in point of completeness than this American edition, and in other respects more convenient, the present edition has been devised and undertaken.

The edition will include everything contained in the fullest previous form of the British edition, together with the extra matter reprinted in the latest form of the American edition, and some other articles besides, which have never been reprinted hitherto. For everything that the edition does contain, the rule of reproduction will be that of adhesion to De Quincey's own text in the latest form in which it left his hands. Even in the particulars of pointing and paragraphing this rule will be observed, except in cases where there is obvious error, or where some slight

change of a merely typographical kind may conduce to clearness. De Quincey had an art of his own in these minute particulars.

It is in the matter of the arrangement and distribution of such a numerous and extremely miscellaneous body of papers that editorial intervention has been most required. The merely chronological method of arrangement having been, as we have already said, obviously unsuitable for such a miscellany, De Quincey, when commencing his collective edition of them, had set out with some notion of distributing them into volumes according to some classification of them by their kinds. The notion, however, was carried out in a woefully capricious and unsatisfactory manner. The exigencies of the printing press having driven him to all sorts of expedients for maintaining, after the issue of the first volume of his edition, a succession of further volumes, each of the due size, he had given up the attempt at continued classification as hopeless, and had thrown out volume after volume, consisting of whatever papers he had readiest at hand or could by any effort pack together with the least glaring effect of incongruity. Hence, when his own fourteen-volume edition was completed, there was, as I have elsewhere written, "the most provoking jumble in the contents of the fourteen volumes: mixed kinds of matter in the same volume, and dispersion of the same kinds of matter over volumes wide apart, and yet all with a pretence of grouping, and with factitious sub-titles invented for the separate volumes on the spur of the moment." Both in the American Riverside edition and in the sixteen-volume form of the British edition there have been modifications of the arrangement,—those in the Riverside edition amounting to a professed re-classification throughout. It seems proper, however, that the opportunity should now be taken for something still more thorough in the way of rectification of the serious inconvenience caused to readers of De Quincey's writings, and the injury done to the writings themselves, by the too easy readiness with which the author let them go forth in the mere chance order of his own temporary straits with the printers.

The following is the general scheme of the present edition :—

Vols. I, II, III. Autobiography and Literary Reminiscences, including the Confessions of an English Opium-Eater, in their last and much enlarged form.
,, IV, V. Biographies and Biographic Sketches.
,, VI, VII. Historical Essays and Researches.
,, VIII. Speculative and Theological Essays.
,, IX. Essays in Political Economy and Politics.
,, X, XI. Papers of Literary Theory and Criticism.
,, XII, XIII. Tales, Romances, and Prose Phantasies, including Suspiria de Profundis.
,, XIV. Miscellanea; with Index to the whole Edition.

If the reader will turn to that portion of De Quincey's own General Preface, reprinted at pp. 8-15 of the present volume, where he propounds, though only in rough sketch, his view of the best theoretical classification of his writings, it will be found that the scheme of rearrangement here proposed is substantially in agreement with that which De Quincey himself would have adopted had he been more at leisure.

Another defect in De Quincey's own collective edition of his writings is the absence of information as to the dates and places of the original appearances of the writings individually. One likes to know when and where any article that one may be reading in reprint first saw the light. Even in a collective reprint of an author's writings in the strict chronological order of their original production, this natural desire ought to be gratified; and, accordingly, in the editions of Macaulay's Miscellaneous Essays, and of Carlyle's, particulars of date, place, etc., of original publication are duly affixed. Not so with De Quincey's edition of his writings, though attention to such minutiæ was the more necessary there because the chronological method of arrangement had been wholly abandoned. You never know in that edition, except by accident or by information obtained independently, whether what you are reading was an early or a late performance of De Quincey's, whether it was published first in London or in Edinburgh, or to what periodical in either town it was a contribution. The defect is the more remarkable because the historical sense was strong in De Quincey, and he had even a passion for chronological exactness. It is time,

at all events, that the defect should be remedied. To every volume of the present edition there will be prefixed an editorial notice explaining from what quarters De Quincey drew the matter contained in that volume ; and to the beginning of every individual section of a volume there will be subjoined an editorial footnote of more precise explanation of the same kind respecting that section, with indication of the amount of change to which the original matter was subjected by De Quincey in the process of his final revisions. All De Quincey's own notes, so far as not distinctly superseded by himself in the course of these revisions, will be punctually preserved. Where an additional editorial footnote may seem indispensable or especially desirable, the appended initial M will always distinguish it sufficiently from what is De Quincey's own.

It is with peculiar pleasure that the present Editor has undertaken the honourable task entrusted to him by the publishers. De Quincey's writings, compared among themselves, are of very different degrees of value, ranging from the comparatively trivial to the supremely excellent ; but, if ever there was a case in which a collection of the whole of what an author has left, the slighter and the greater together, ought to be conveniently accessible on the shelves of libraries, that distinction is surely due to the remains of De Quincey. His fame, established in his lifetime, has been growing ever since, and is still growing. He has, one may say, a constituency of special admirers over all the English-speaking world ; and, by very evident signs, the circle of this constituency is every year extending itself. And why ? Because every year it is more and more widely recognised that this strange man, dead now so many years ago, is one of the princes of English prose literature, and an almost unique personality in the whole history of English literature, whether in prose or in verse. Here, born in Manchester in 1785, was one of those rare beings who, from some peculiarity of constitutional endowment, are destined to be "intellectual creatures," caring chiefly for intellectual pleasures and pursuits, and sure to drift therefore into the literary species of industry. The mystery of his mastery in that industry, when he did drift into it, has still to be accounted for. Was

it that in his brain from birth there was more than usual of that extra pinch of phosphorus, or whatever else in brain-structure a crude physiology seeks to discern, which may be supposed to distinguish superb genius from ordinary talent? Accept the crude physiological fancy, and the strange thing is that the opium imbibed through so many years had not quenched the phosphorus, or appreciably impaired its action. Better, however, not attribute too much to chemicals, real or imaginary, in studying the result. It may be impossible ever to desist altogether from the recollection of De Quincey by his self-chosen name of "The English Opium-Eater"; but more and more it will be well to try to remember him simply as Thomas De Quincey. Or, if there must be some accompanying visual imagination of the figure, look, and demeanour of the man who bore this name, the means are not wanting. Sketches of De Quincey at various periods of his life are numerous enough; but one would naturally prefer here the best and surest of him in his latest Edinburgh days. For that I have not to go far.

No man now living in the present Edinburgh knew De Quincey so intimately in the last seven years of his life, or saw so much of him, as Mr. J. R. Findlay; and the following extract from Mr. Findlay's little volume of 1886 entitled *Personal Recollections of Thomas De Quincey* may be relied on as the most authentic and exact sketch of the De Quincey of those years now procurable:—"He was a very little man "(about 5 feet 3 or 4 inches); his countenance the most "remarkable for its intellectual attractiveness that I have "ever seen. His features, though not regular, were aristocra-"tically fine, and an air of delicate breeding pervaded the face. "His forehead was unusually high, square, and compact. At "first sight his face appeared boyishly fresh and smooth, "with a sort of hectic glow upon it that contrasted remark-"ably with the evident appearances of age in the grizzled "hair and dim-looking eyes. The flush or bloom on the "cheeks was, I have no doubt, an effect of his constant use of "opium; and the apparent smoothness of the face dis-"appeared upon examination. The best description of his "peculiar appearance in this respect is one given by Sir "Walter Scott in reference to General Platoff, whom Scott

" met at Paris, and from whom, he tells us, he took his " portrait of Mr. Touchwood in *St. Ronan's Well*. 'His " face, which at the distance of a yard or two seemed hale " and smooth, appeared, when closely examined, to be " seamed with a million of wrinkles crossing each other in " every direction possible, but as fine as if drawn by the " point of a very fine needle.' Mr. De Quincey's eyes were " dark in colour (the Scotch word *blae* would best express " the shade), the iris large, but with a strange flatness and " dimness of aspect, which, however, did not indicate any " deficiency of sight. So far as I ever observed, he saw " distant objects tolerably well, and almost to the very end " of his life he could read the smallest print without spec- " tacles. . . . His dress was at all times peculiar. His " clothes had generally a look of extreme age, and also of " having been made for a person somewhat larger than him- " self. I believe that the real cause of this was that he had " become much thinner in those later years, whilst he wore, " and did wear, I suppose, till the end of his life, the clothes " that had been made for him years before. I have some- " times seen appearances about him of a shirt and shirt-collar, " but usually there were no indications of these articles of " dress. When I came to visit him in his lodgings, I saw " him in all stages of costume ; sometimes he would come in " to me from his bedroom to his parlour with shoes but no " stockings, and sometimes with stockings but no shoes. " When in bed, where I also saw him from time to time, " he wore a large jacket,—not exactly an under-jacket, " but a jacket made in the form of a coat, of white " flannel ; something like a cricketer's coat, in fact. In the " street his appearance was equally singular. He walked " with considerable rapidity (he said walking was the only " athletic exercise in which he had ever excelled), and with " an odd one-sided, and yet straightforward motion, moving " his legs only, and neither his arms, head, nor any other " part of his body,—like Wordsworth's cloud,

" ' Moving altogether if he moved at all.'

" His hat, which had the antediluvian aspect characteristic " of the rest of his clothes, was generally stuck on the back

" of his head ; and no one who ever met that antiquated " figure, with that strangely dreamy and intellectual face, " making its way rapidly, and with an oddly deferential air, " through any of the streets of Edinburgh,—a sight certainly " by no means common, for he was very seldom to be seen " in town,—could ever forget it."

If, even after this, the reader would still have something more, let him take these lines from Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*, with the assurance that all who ever saw De Quincey in his old age recognise in them the most startlingly accurate description of him, as if by some prophetic anticipation, that could possibly be given in succinct metre :—

> " He came, the bard, a little druid wight
> Of withered aspect ; but his eye was keen,
> With sweetness mixed. In russet brown bedight,
> As is his sister of the copses green,
> He crept along, unpromising of mien.
> Gross he who judges so ! his soul was fair."

If the name " bard " may be extended to a prose-writer of the bardic class, this description also is exact in almost every point. It is exact more especially in its added picture of the particular bard in view as " a little druid wight." By the very limits of the territory within which De Quincey moved and had local habitation during his life, no less than by character and physiognomy, he was of the *antiqua gens Druidum*. Through all the seventy-four years of his life he was never once, it seems, out of the British Islands. Twice he visited Ireland ; but the main topography of his life lies in the scenes and neighbourhoods suggested by this succession of names :—Manchester, Bath, Wiltshire, Manchester again, North Wales, London, Chester, Oxford, London again, Somersetshire, Grasmere and the English Lake district, London yet again, Grasmere again, and, finally, and in far the largest proportion, Edinburgh and the vicinity of Edinburgh. It was at about the mid-point of his long and final connexion with Edinburgh, and therefore about six years before the beginning of Mr. Findlay's acquaintanceship with him, that the present Editor had the privilege of meeting him more than once and of

spending some hours in his company; and it may be some little qualification for the present Editor's duty in these volumes that he remembers those meetings well, and can, in reading any paper in the volumes, or any sentence in any of the papers, re-imagine distinctly, for himself, the face, voice, and manner of the living De Quincey.

DAVID MASSON.

EDINBURGH: *September* 1889.

42 LOTHIAN STREET.

EDITOR'S PREFACE TO THIS VOLUME

The present volume contains (1) De Quincey's own General Preface of 1853, as written for the first volume of the Collective Edition of his Writings then begun, and (2) the whole of that portion of his Autobiography which appeared in the same volume, with continuation in the next, under the title of "Autobiographic Sketches."

The General Preface.—This was written when De Quincey was still somewhat in the dark as to what would ultimately be the entire contents of his collective edition, or what would be the order of their arrangement, and could only make a forecast on the subject from the twelve volumes of the collective American edition that had already been published (see *ante*, p. xiv), and from his own knowledge of the quantity of more matter that remained to be brought in. Hence the Preface is hardly what De Quincey would have written had he had the whole of his writings under exact survey. It gives no adequate conspectus of them in their complete variety, but only suggests a classification of them, and lights here and there, by way of illustration, on a selected example, not always the best that could have been chosen. The classification suggested, however, is valuable; and the whole of the Preface is interesting and characteristic.

The Autobiography.—When De Quincey had resolved that his collective edition should open with a revised collection of his expressly autobiographic papers, his most

obvious store of material was in the series of articles he had begun in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* for February 1834, under the title "Sketches of Men and Manners from the Autobiography of an English Opium-Eater," and had continued through the rest of that year, and for some years more, in the pages of the same monthly, under the same title or modifications of it. But, as we saw (*ante*, pp. xii-xiii), he had quite recently, in the pages of *Hogg's Instructor*, begun, under the title of "A Sketch from Childhood," another series of autobiographic articles, filling a gap in the previous Tait series; and these supplementary articles, straggling at intervals through the numbers of the Edinburgh weekly for the years 1851 and 1852, had necessarily to be interwoven with their predecessors. Further, in certain numbers of *Blackwood's Magazine* for 1845, from March onwards, there were special articles of De Quincey's, of a peculiar autobiographic sort, under the title of "Suspiria de Profundis, being a Sequel to the Confessions of an English Opium-Eater," or titled independently; and these also had to be incorporated. One may guess, accordingly, how De Quincey proceeded in adapting the autobiographic material he had at hand for connected republication in 1853. He took the numbers of *Tait's Magazine*, *Blackwood's Magazine*, and *Hogg's Instructor* of the dates indicated, and cut and carved among his own articles in them, welding these together, with retrenchments here and enlargements and alterations there, till the result satisfied him. The "Autobiographic Sketches," which composed the first volume of the Collective Edition of his Writings in 1853, and a portion of the second volume, were, therefore, a coagulation of matter previously printed in 1834-5, 1845, and 1851-2, all in Edinburgh periodicals. In the present edition we keep to his example by beginning with the "Autobiographic Sketches," only changing that title into "Autobiography," as less ragged,—a change for which there is ample justification in De Quincey's prior use of the word "Autobiography" in designating portions of the series, and in his subsequent frequent use of the same term as an optional alternative in referring to the completed series. What has to be chiefly remembered here is that the present volume does not include the whole of De Quincey's Autobiography,

as expressly so designated by himself, but only as much of it as he had managed to overtake in the revision of his writings for the Collective Edition of 1853-60. Some additional portions of his already printed Autobiography, which he doubtless meant to revise some time or other, never had the benefit of that intention, and remained in their unrevised shape as articles in some old numbers of *Tait's Magazine*. These will follow in the next volume of the present edition.

D. M.

DE QUINCEY'S GENERAL PREFACE IN 1853

THE miscellaneous writings, which I propose to lay before the public in this body of Selections, are in part to be regarded as a republication of papers scattered through several British journals twenty or thirty years ago; which papers have been reprinted in a collective form by an American house of high character in Boston: but in part they are to be viewed as entirely new; large sections having been intercalated in the present edition, and other changes made, which, even to the old parts, by giving very great expansion, give sometimes a character of absolute novelty. Once, therefore, at home, with the allowance for the changes here indicated, and once in America, it may be said that these writings have been in some sense published. But *publication* is a great idea never even approximated by the utmost anxieties of man. Not the Bible—not the little book which, in past times, came next to the Bible in European diffusion and currency[1]—viz., the treatise *De Imitatione Christi*,

[1] "*Next to the Bible in currency*":—That is, next in the fifteenth century to the Bible of the nineteenth century. The diffusion of the *De Imitatione Christi* over Christendom (the idea of *Christendom*, it must be remembered, not then including any part of America) anticipated in 1453 the diffusion of the Bible in 1853. But why? Through what causes? Elsewhere I have attempted to show that this enormous (and seemingly incredible) popularity of the *De Imitatione Christi* is virtually to be interpreted as a vicarious popularity of the Bible. At that time the Bible itself was a fountain of inspired truth everywhere sealed up, but a whisper ran through the western

has yet in any generation been really published. Where is the *printed* book of which, in Coleridge's words, it may not be said that, after all efforts to publish itself, still it remains, for the world of possible readers, "as good as manuscript"? Not to insist, however, upon any romantic rigour in constructing this idea, and abiding by the ordinary standard of what is understood by *publication*, it is probable that, in many cases, my own papers must have failed in reaching even this. For they were printed as contributions to journals. Now, that mode of publication is unavoidably disadvantageous to a writer, except under unusual conditions. By its harsh peremptory punctuality, it drives a man into hurried writing, possibly into saying the thing that is not. They won't wait an hour for you in a Magazine or a Review; they won't wait for truth; you may as well reason with the sea, or a railway train, as in such a case with an editor; and, as it makes no difference whether that sea which you desire to argue with is the Mediterranean or the Baltic, so, with that editor and his deafness, it matters not a straw whether he belong to a northern or a southern journal. Here is one evil of journal-writing—viz., its overmastering precipitation. A second is —its effect at times in narrowing your publicity. Every journal, or pretty nearly so, is understood to hold (perhaps in its very title it makes proclamation of holding) certain fixed principles in politics, or possibly religion. These distinguishing features, which become badges of enmity and intolerance, all the more intense as they descend upon narrower and narrower grounds of separation, must, at the very threshold, by warning off those who dissent from them, *so* far operate to limit your audience. To take my own case as an illustration, these present sketches were published in a journal dedicated to pur-

nations of Europe, that the work of Thomas à Kempis contained some slender rivulets of truth silently stealing away into light from that interdicted fountain. This belief (so at least I read the case) led to the prodigious multiplication of the book, of which not merely the re-impressions, but the separate translations, are past all counting; though bibliographers *have* undertaken to count them. The book came forward as an answer to the sighing of Christian Europe for light from heaven. I speak of Thomas à Kempis as the author: but his claim was disputed. Gerson was adopted by France as the author; and other local saints by other nations.

poses of political change such as many people thought revolutionary. I thought so myself, and did not go along with its politics. Inevitably that accident shut them out from the knowledge of a very large reading class. Undoubtedly this journal, being ably and conscientiously conducted, had some circulation amongst a neutral class of readers ; and amongst its own class it was popular. But its own class did not ordinarily occupy that position in regard to social influence which could enable them rapidly to diffuse the knowledge of a writer. A reader whose social standing is moderate may communicate his views upon a book or a writer to his own circle ; but his own circle is a narrow one. Whereas, in aristocratic classes, having more leisure and wealth, the intercourse is inconceivably more rapid ; so that the publication of any book which interests *them* is secured at once ; and this publishing influence passes downwards ; but rare, indeed, is the inverse process of publication through an influence spreading upwards.

According to the way here described, the papers now presented to the public, like many another set of papers nominally published, were *not* so in any substantial sense. Here, at home, they may be regarded as still unpublished.[1] But, in such a case, why were not the papers at once detached from the journal, and reprinted ? In the neglect to do this, some there are who will read a blameable carelessness in the author ; but in that carelessness others will read a secret consciousness that the papers were of doubtful value. I have heard, indeed, that some persons, hearing of this republication, had interpreted the case thus :—Within the last four or five years, a practice has arisen amongst authors of gathering together into volumes their own scattered con-

[1] At the same time it must not be denied, that, if you lose by a journal in the way here described, you also gain by it. The journal gives you the benefit of its own separate audience, that might else never have heard your name. On the other hand, in such a case, the journal secures to you the special enmity of its own peculiar antagonists. These papers, for instance, of mine, not being political, were read possibly in a friendly temper by the regular supporters of the journal that published them. But some of my own political friends regarded me with displeasure for connecting myself at all with a reforming journal. And far more, who would have been liberal enough to disregard that objection, naturally lost sight of me when under occultation to *them* in a journal which they never saw.

tributions to periodical literature. Upon that suggestion, they suppose me suddenly to have remembered that I also had made such contributions ; that mine might be entitled to their chance as well as those of others ; and, accordingly, that on such a slight invitation *ab extra* I had called back into life what otherwise I had long since regarded as having already fulfilled its mission, and must doubtless have dismissed to oblivion.

I do not certainly know, or entirely believe, that any such thing was really said. But, however that may be, no representation can be more opposed to the facts. Never for an instant did I falter in my purpose of republishing most of the papers which I had written. Neither, if I myself had been inclined to forget them, should I have been allowed to do so by strangers. For it happens that, during the fourteen last years, I have received from many quarters in England, in Ireland, in the British Colonies, and in the United States, a series of letters expressing a far profounder interest in papers written by myself than any which I could ever think myself entitled to look for. Had I, therefore, otherwise cherished no purposes of republication, it now became a duty of gratitude and respect to these numerous correspondents, that I should either republish the papers in question, or explain why I did not. The obstacle in fact had been in part the shifting state of the law which regulated literary property, and especially the property in periodical literature. But a far greater difficulty lay in the labour (absolutely insurmountable to myself) of bringing together from so many quarters the scattered materials of the collection. This labour, most fortunately, was suddenly taken off my hands by the eminent house of Messrs. Ticknor, Reid, & Fields, Boston, U.S. To them I owe my acknowledgments, first of all, for that service : they have brought together a great majority of my fugitive papers in a series of volumes now amounting to twelve. And, secondly, I am bound to mention that they have made me a sharer in the profits of the publication, called upon to do so by no law whatever, and assuredly by no expectation of that sort upon my part.

Taking as the basis of my remarks this Collective American Edition, I will here attempt a rude general classification

of all the articles which compose it. I distribute them grossly into three classes :—*First*, into that class which proposes primarily to amuse the reader ; but which, in doing so, may or may not happen occasionally to reach a higher station, at which the amusement passes into an impassioned interest. Some papers are merely playful ; but others have a mixed character. These present *Autobiographic Sketches* illustrate what I mean. Generally, they pretend to little beyond that sort of amusement which attaches to any real story, thoughtfully and faithfully related, moving through a succession of scenes sufficiently varied, that are not suffered to remain too long upon the eye, and that connect themselves at every stage with intellectual objects. But, even here, I do not scruple to claim from the reader, occasionally, a higher consideration. At times, the narrative rises into a far higher key. Most of all it does so at a period of the writer's life where, of necessity, a severe abstraction takes place from all that could invest him with any alien interest ; no display that might dazzle the reader, nor ambition that could carry his eye forward with curiosity to the future, nor successes, fixing his eye on the present ; nothing on the stage but a solitary infant, and its solitary combat with grief—a mighty darkness, and a sorrow without a voice. But something of the same interest will be found, perhaps, to rekindle at a maturer age, when the characteristic features of the individual mind have been unfolded. And I contend that much more than amusement ought to settle upon any narrative of a life that is really *confidential*. It is singular—but many of my readers will know it for a truth—that vast numbers of people, though liberated from all reasonable motives of self-restraint, *cannot* be confidential—have it not in their power to lay aside reserve ; and many, again, cannot be so with particular people. I have witnessed more than once the case, that a young female dancer, at a certain turn of a peculiar dance, could not—though she had died for it—sustain a free, fluent motion. Aerial chains fell upon her at one point ; some invisible spell (who could say *what ?*) froze her elasticity. Even as a horse, at noonday on an open heath, starts aside from something his rider cannot see ; or as the flame within a Davy lamp feeds upon the poisonous

gas up to the meshes that surround it, but there suddenly is arrested by barriers that no Aladdin will ever dislodge. It is because a man cannot see and measure these mystical forces which palsy him, that he cannot deal with them effectually. If he were able really to pierce the haze which so often envelops, even to himself, his own secret springs of action and reserve, there cannot be a life moving at all under intellectual impulses that would not, through that single force of absolute frankness, fall within the reach of a deep, solemn, and sometimes even of a thrilling interest. Without pretending to an interest of this quality, I have done what was possible on *my* part towards the readiest access to such an interest by perfect sincerity: saying everywhere nothing *but* the truth; and in any case forbearing to say the *whole* truth only through consideration for others.

Into the second class I throw those papers which address themselves purely to the understanding as an insulated faculty; or do so primarily. Let me call them by the general name of ESSAYS. These, as in other cases of the same kind, must have their value measured by two separate questions. A.—What is the problem, and of what rank in dignity or in use, which the Essay undertakes? And next, that point being settled—B.—What is the success obtained? and (as a separate question) What is the executive ability displayed in the solution of the problem? This latter question is naturally no question for myself, as the answer would involve a verdict upon my own merit. But, generally, there will be quite enough in the answer to question A for establishing the value of any essay on its soundest basis. *Prudens interrogatio est dimidium scientiæ.* Skilfully to frame your question, is half-way towards insuring the true answer. Two or three of the problems treated in these Essays I will here rehearse.

1. ESSENISM.—The essay on this, where mentioned at all in print, has been mentioned as dealing with a question of pure speculative curiosity: so little suspicion is abroad of that real question which lies below. Essenism means simply this—Christianity before Christ, and consequently without Christ. If, therefore, Essenism could make good its pretensions, there at one blow would be an end of Christianity,

which in that case is not only superseded as an idle repetition of a religious system already published, but also as a criminal plagiarism. Nor can the wit of man evade that conclusion. But even *that* is not the worst. When we contemplate the total orb of Christianity, we see it divide into two hemispheres; first, an Ethical system differing *centrally* from any previously made known to man; secondly, a mysterious and divine machinery for reconciling man to God: a teaching to be taught; but also a work to be worked. Now, the first we find again in the Ethics of the counterfeit Essenes—which ought not to surprise us at all: since it is surely an easy thing for him who pillages my thoughts *ad libitum*, to reproduce a perfect resemblance in his own[1]; but what has become of the second, viz., not the teaching, but the operative working of Christianity? The Ethical system is replaced by a stolen system: but what replaces the mysterious *agencies* of the Christian faith? In Essenism we find again a saintly scheme of Ethics: but where is the scheme of Mediation?

In the Romish Church, there have been some theologians who have also seen reason to suspect the romance of "Essenismus." And I am not sure that the knowledge of this fact may not have operated to blunt the suspicions of the Protestant churches. I do not mean that such a fact would have absolutely deafened Protestant ears to the grounds of suspicion when loudly proclaimed; but it is very likely to have indisposed them towards listening. Meantime, so far as I am acquainted with these Roman Catholic demurs, the difference between *them* and my own is broad. They, without suspecting any subtle, fraudulent purpose, simply recoil from the romantic air of such a statement—which builds up, as with an enchanter's wand, an important sect, such as could not possibly have escaped the notice of Christ and his apostles. I, on the other hand, insist not only upon the revolting incompatibility of such a sect with the absence of

[1] The crime of Josephus in relation to Christianity is the same, in fact, as that of Lauder in respect to Milton. It was easy enough to detect plagiarisms in the *Paradise Lost* from Latin passages fathered upon imaginary writers, when these passages had previously been forged by Lauder himself for the purpose of sustaining such a charge.

all attention to it in the New Testament, but (which is far more important) the incompatibility of such a sect (as a sect elder than Christ) with the originality and heavenly revelation of Christianity. Here is my first point of difference from the Romish objectors. The second is this: not content with exposing the imposture, I go on, and attempt to show in what real circumstances, fraudulently disguised, it might naturally have arisen. In the real circumstances of the Christian Church, when struggling with *Jewish* persecution at some period of the generation between the Crucifixion and the siege of Jerusalem, arose probably that secret defensive society of Christians which suggested to Josephus his knavish forgery. We must remember, that Josephus did not write until *after* the great ruins effected by the siege; that he wrote at Rome, far removed from the criticism of those survivors who could have exposed, or had a motive for exposing, his malicious frauds; and, finally, that he wrote under the patronage of the Flavian family: by his sycophancy he had won their protection, which would have overawed any Christian whatever from coming forward to unmask him, in the very improbable case of a work so large, costly, and, by its title, merely archæological, finding its way, at such a period, into the hands of any poor hunted Christian.[1]

2. The Cæsars.—This, though written hastily, and in a situation where I had no aid from books, is yet far from being what some people have supposed it—a simple recapitulation, or *resumé*, of the Roman Imperatorial History. It moves rapidly over the ground, but still with an exploring eye, carried right and left into the deep shades that have gathered so thickly over the one solitary road[2] traversing that part of history. Glimpses of moral truth, or sugges-

[1] It is a significant fact, that Dr. Strauss, whose sceptical spirit, left to its own disinterested motions, would have looked through and through this monstrous fable of Essenism, coolly adopted it, no questions asked, as soon as he perceived the value of it as an argument against Christianity.

[2] "*Solitary road*":—The reader must remember that, until the seventh century of our era, when Mahometanism arose, there was no *collateral* history. Why there was none, why no Gothic, why no Parthian history, it is for Rome to explain. We tax ourselves, and are taxed by others, with many an imaginary neglect as regards India:

tions of what may lead to it ; indications of neglected difficulties, and occasionally conjectural solutions of such difficulties—these are what this Essay offers. It was meant as a specimen of fruits, gathered hastily, and without effort, by a vagrant but thoughtful mind ; through the coercion of its theme, sometimes it became ambitious, but I did not give to it an ambitious title. Still I felt that the meanest of these suggestions merited a valuation : derelicts they were, not in the sense of things wilfully abandoned by my predecessors on that road, but in the sense of things blindly overlooked. And, summing up in one word the pretensions of this particular Essay, I will venture to claim for it so much, at least, of originality as ought *not* to have been left open to anybody in the nineteenth century.

3. Cicero.—This is not, as might be imagined, any literary valuation of Cicero ; it is a new reading of Roman history in the most dreadful and comprehensive of her convulsions, in that final stage of her transmutations to which Cicero was himself a party—and, as I maintain, a most selfish and unpatriotic party. He was governed in one half by his own private interest as a *novus homo* dependent upon a wicked oligarchy, and in the other half by his blind hatred of Cæsar ; the grandeur of whose nature he could not comprehend, and the real patriotism of whose policy could never be appreciated by one bribed to a selfish course. The great mob of historians have but one way of constructing the great events of this era—they succeed to it as to an inheritance ; and chiefly under the misleading of that *prestige* which is attached to the name of Cicero : on which account it was that I gave this title to my Essay. Seven years after it was published, this Essay, slight and imperfectly developed as is the exposition of its parts, began to receive some public countenance.

I was going on to abstract the principle involved in some other Essays. But I forbear. These specimens are sufficient for the purpose of informing the reader—that I do not write without a thoughtful consideration of my subject ;

but assuredly we cannot be taxed with *that* neglect. No part of our Indian Empire, or of its adjacencies, but has occupied the researches of our oriental scholars.

and also—that to think reasonably upon any question, has never been allowed by me as a sufficient ground for writing upon it, unless I believed myself able to offer some considerable novelty. Generally I claim (not arrogantly, but with firmness) the merit of rectification applied to absolute errors, or to injurious limitations of the truth.

Finally, as a third class, and, in virtue of their aim, as a far higher class of compositions included in the American Collection, I rank *The Confessions of an Opium-Eater*, and also (but more emphatically) the *Suspiria de Profundis*. On these, as modes of impassioned prose ranging under no precedents that I am aware of in any literature, it is much more difficult to speak justly, whether in a hostile or a friendly character. As yet, neither of these two works has ever received the least degree of that correction and pruning which both require so extensively; and of the *Suspiria* not more than perhaps one-third has yet been printed. When both have been fully revised, I shall feel myself entitled to ask for a more determinate adjudication on their claims as works of art. At present I feel authorised to make haughtier pretensions in right of their *conception* than I shall venture to do, under the peril of being supposed to characterise their *execution*. Two remarks only I shall address to the equity of my reader. First, I desire to remind him of the perilous difficulty besieging all attempts to clothe in words the visionary scenes derived from the world of dreams, where a single false note, a single word in a wrong key, ruins the whole music; and, secondly, I desire him to consider the utter sterility of universal literature in this one department of impassioned prose; which certainly argues some singular difficulty, suggesting a singular duty of indulgence in criticising any attempt that even imperfectly succeeds. The sole Confessions, belonging to past times, that have at all succeeded in engaging the attention of men, are those of St. Austin and of Rousseau. The very idea of breathing a record of human passion, not into the ear of the random crowd, but of the saintly confessional, argues an impassioned theme. Impassioned, therefore, should be the tenor of the composition. Now, in St. Augustine's *Confessions* is found one most impassioned passage,—viz., the lamentation for the death

of his youthful friend in the 4th Book; one, and no more. Further, there is nothing. In Rousseau there is not even so much. In the whole work there is nothing grandly affecting but the character and the inexplicable misery of the writer.

Meantime, by what accident, so foreign to my nature, do I find myself laying foundations towards a higher valuation of my own workmanship? Oh, reader, I have been talking idly. I care not for any valuation that depends upon comparison with others. Place me where you will, on the scale of comparison: only suffer me, though standing lowest in your catalogue, to rejoice in the recollection of letters expressing the most fervid interest in particular passages or scenes of the *Confessions*, and by rebound from *them*, an interest in their author: suffer me also to anticipate that, on the publication of some parts yet in arrear of the *Suspiria*, you yourself may possibly write a letter to me, protesting that your disapprobation is just where it was, but nevertheless that you are disposed to shake hands with me—by way of proof that you like me better than I deserve.

GREENHAY, MANCHESTER.

Where De Quincey spent his early days. See p. 34 n. and p. 57.

[Adapted from a print drawn by George Evans "from an oil painting by Carse."]

AUTOBIOGRAPHY FROM 1785 TO 1803

CHAPTER I

PARENTAGE AND THE PATERNAL HOME[1]

My father was a plain and unpretending man, who began life with what is considered in England (or *was* considered) a small fortune, viz., six thousand pounds.[2] I once heard a young banker in Liverpool, with the general assent of those who heard him, fix upon that identical sum of six thousand pounds as exemplifying, for the standard of English life, the absolute *ideal* of a dangerous inheritance; just too little, as he said, to promise comfort or *real* independence, and yet large enough to operate as a temptation to indolence. Six thousand pounds, therefore, he considered in the light of a snare to a young man, and almost as a malicious bequest. On the other hand, Ludlow, the regicide, who, as the son of an English baronet, and as ex-commander-in-chief of the

[1] What is here reproduced as an independent chapter is a portion of the first of De Quincey's autobiographic articles in *Tait's Magazine*. The article will be found in the number of that Magazine for February 1834. Though De Quincey availed himself of that article, as well as of others in *Blackwood* and in *Hogg's Instructor*, when he recast his autobiographic records for fresh publication in 1853, he omitted this portion of it. As it seems essential, however, in preparation for what is to follow, I have ventured to restore it and to give it a title.—M.

[2] De Quincey's father called himself simply Thomas Quincey, without any prefix of *De*, and was known by that name from about 1779 to 1793 in the business world of Manchester.—M.

Parliament cavalry, etc., knew well what belonged to elegant and luxurious life, records it as his opinion of an Englishman who had sheltered him from state blood-hounds, that in possessing an annual revenue of £100, he enjoyed all the solid comforts of this life,—neither himself rapacious of his neighbour's goods, nor rich enough in his own person to offer a mark to the rapacity of others. This was in 1660, when the expenses of living in England were not so widely removed, *æquatis æquandis*, from the common average of this day; both scales being far below that of the long war-period which followed the French Revolution.

What in one man, however, is wise moderation, may happen in another, differently circumstanced, to be positive injustice, or sordid inaptitude to aspire. At, or about, his 26th year, my father married; and it is probable that the pretensions of my mother, which were, in some respects, more elevated than his own, might concur with his own activity of mind to break the temptation, if for him any temptation had ever existed, to a life of obscure repose.[1] This small fortune, in a country so expensive as England, did not promise to his wife the style of living to which she had been accustomed. Every man wishes for his wife what, on his own account, he might readily dispense with. Partly, therefore, with a view to what he would consider as her reasonable expectations, he entered into trade as an Irish and a West Indian merchant. But there is no doubt that, even apart from consideration for his wife, the general tone of feeling in English society, which stamps a kind of disreputableness on the avowed intention to *do nothing*, would, at any rate, have sent him into some mode of active life. In saying that he was a *West Indian* merchant, I must be careful to acquit his memory of any connexion with the slave trade, by which so many fortunes were made at that era in Liverpool, Glasgow, etc. Whatever may be thought of *slavery* itself as modified in the British colonies, or of the remedies attempted for that evil by modern statesmanship; of the kidnapping, murdering

[1] The maiden name of De Quincey's mother was Elizabeth Penson. About or shortly after the date of her marriage, two brothers of hers went out to Bengal as officers in the service of the East India Company.—M.

slave-trade,[1] there cannot be two opinions: and my father, though connected with the West Indian trade in all honourable branches, was so far from lending himself even by a *passive* concurrence to this most memorable abomination, that he was one of those conscientious protesters who, throughout England, for a long period after the first publication[2] of Clarkson's famous Essay, and the evidence delivered before the House of Commons, strictly abstained from the use of sugar in his own family.

Meantime, as respected some paramount feelings of my after life, I drew from both parents, and the several aspects of their characters, great advantages. Each, in a different sense, was a high-toned moralist; and my mother had a separate advantage, as compared with persons of that rank, in high-bred and polished manners. Every man has his own standard of a *summum bonum*, as exemplified in the arrangements of life. For my own part, without troubling others as to my peculiar likings and dislikings, in points which illustrate nothing,—I shall acknowledge frankly that in every scheme of social happiness I could ever frame, the spirit of *manners* entered largely as an indispensable element. The Italian ideal of their own language, as a spoken one, is expressed thus—*Lingua Toscana in bocca Romana*: there must be two elements—the Florentine choice of words, and the Florentine idiom, concurring with the Roman pronunciation.

[1] The confusion of *slavery* with the *slave-trade*, at one time, was universal. But nowadays it is supposed by many to be a superfluous care, if one is sedulous to mark the distinction in a pointed way. Yet it was but last year that, happening to converse with a very respectable and well-informed surgeon in the north, I found him assuming, as a matter of course, that *emancipation*, etc., had been the express and immediate object of Wilberforce, Clarkson, etc., in their long crusade: nor could I satisfy him that, however *ultimately* contemplating that result, they had even found it necessary to disown it as a present object.

[2] Writing where I have no books, like Salmasius, I make all my references to a forty years' course of reading, by memory. In *every* case except where I make a formal citation marked as such, this is to be understood. My chronology on this particular subject is rather uncertain: Clarkson's Essay (originally Latin) published, I think, in 1787, Anthony Benezet's book, Granville Sharpe's Trial of the Slave question in a court of justice—these were the openings: then came Wilberforce, Clarkson's second work, the Evidence before Parliament.

Parodying this, I would express my conception of a society (suppose a household) entirely well constituted, and fitted to yield the greatest amount of lasting pleasure, in these terms, —the morals of the middle classes of England, combined with the manners of the highest; or, more pointedly, by the morals of the gentry, with the manners of the nobility. Manners more noble, or more polished than the manners of the English nobility, I cannot imagine; nor, on the other hand, a morality which is built less upon the mere amiableness of quick sensibilities, or more entirely upon massy substructions of principle and conscience, than the morality of the British middle classes. Books, literature, institutions of police, facts innumerable, within my own experience, and open to all the world, can be brought to bear with a world of evidence upon this subject. I am aware of the anger which I shall rouse in many minds by both doctrines; but I am not disposed to concede any point of what to me appears the truth, either to general misanthropy and cynicism, to political prejudices, or to anti-national feeling. Such notices as have occurred to me on these subjects, within my personal experience, I shall bring forward as they happen to arise. Let them be met and opposed as they shall deserve. Morals are sturdy things, and not so much liable to erroneous valuation. But the fugitive, volatile, imponderable essences which concern the spirit of manners, are really not susceptible of any just or intelligible treatment by mere words and distinctions, unless in so far as they are assisted and interpreted by continual illustrations from absolute experience. Meantime, the reader will not accuse me of an aristocratic feeling, now that he understands what it is that I admire in the aristocracy, and with what limitation. It is my infirmity, if the reader chooses so to consider it, that I cannot frame an ideal of society, happily constituted, without including, as a foremost element, and possibly in an undue balance, certain refinements in the spirit of manners, which, to many excellent people, hardly exist at all as objects of conscious regard. In the same spirit, but without acknowledging the least effeminacy, even in the excess to which I carry it, far better and more cheerfully I could dispense with some part of the downright necessaries of life, than with certain circumstances

of elegance and propriety in the daily habits of using them.

With these feelings, and, if the reader chooses, these infirmities, I was placed in a singularly fortunate position. My father, as I have said, had no brilliant qualities: but the moral integrity which I have attributed to his class was so peculiarly expressed in *him*, that in my early life, and for many years after his death, I occasionally met strangers who would say to me, almost in the same form of words, (so essential was their harmony as to the thing)—"Sir, I knew your father: he was the most upright man I ever met with in my life." Nobody, that I remember, praised him under the notion of a clever man, or a man of talent. Yet that he was so in some subordinate sense is probable, both from his success as a man of business, and more unequivocally in other ways. He wrote a book: and, though not a book of much pretension in its subject, yet in those days to have written a book at all was creditable to a man's activity of mind, and to his strength of character, in acting without a precedent. In the execution, this book was really respectable. As to the subject, it was a sketch of a tour in the midland counties of England, in one octavo volume. The plan upon which it was constructed made it tolerably miscellaneous; for throughout the tour a double purpose was kept before the reader—viz., of attention to the Fine Arts, in a general account of the paintings and statues in the principal mansions lying near the line of his route; and, secondly, of attention to the Mechanic Arts, as displayed in the canals, manufactories, etc., then rising everywhere into activity, and quickened into a hastier development by Arkwright and the Peels in one direction, and, in another, by Brindley, the engineer, under the patronage of the Duke of Bridgewater. This Duke, by the way, was guided by an accident of life, concurring with his own disposition, and his gloomy sensibility to the wrong or the indignity he had suffered, into those ascetic habits which left his income disposable for canals, and for the patronising of Brindley. He had been jilted: and in consequence he became a woman-hater—a misogynist—as bitter as Euripides. On seeing a woman approaching, he would "quarter," and zig-zag to any extent, rather than face her.

Being, by this accident of his life, released from the expenses of a ducal establishment, he was the better able to create that immense wealth which afterwards yielded vast estates to the then Marquis of Stafford, to the Earl of Bridgewater, etc. In its outline and conception, my father's book was exactly what is so much wanted at this time for the whole island, and was some years ago pointed out by the *Quarterly Review* as a *desideratum* not easily supplied—viz., a guide to the whole wealth of art, above ground and below, which, in this land of ours, every square mile crowds upon the notice of strangers. In the style of its execution, and the alternate treatment of the mechanic arts and the fine arts, the work resembles the well-known tours of Arthur Young, which blended rural industry with picture galleries; excepting only that in my father's I remember no politics, perhaps because it was written before the French Revolution.[1] Partly, perhaps, it might be a cause, and partly an effect, of this attention paid by my father to the galleries of art in the aristocratic mansions that throughout the principal rooms of his own house there were scattered a small collection of paintings by old Italian masters. I mention this fact, not as a circumstance of exclusive elegance belonging to my father's establishment, but for the very opposite reason, as belonging very generally to my father's class. Many of them possessed collections much finer than his; and I remember that two of the few visits on which, when a child, I was allowed to accompany my mother, were expressly to see a picture-gallery, belonging to a merchant, not much wealthier than my father. In reality, I cannot say anything more to the honour of this mercantile class than the fact that, being a wealthy class,

[1] The book by De Quincey's father here described was published in London in 1775, when the author was but in his twenty-third year. It was entitled *A Short Tour in the Midland Counties of England, performed in the Summer of* 1772, *together with an Account of a similar Excursion undertaken September* 1774; but the greater portion of the volume had previously appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, in successive instalments in the months of May, June, July, August, and September 1774, with the superscription "By T—— Q——" to indicate the authorship. Having examined the articles as they appeared in the Magazine, I can vouch for the perfect accuracy of De Quincey's description of his father's book.—M.

and living with a free and liberal expenditure, they applied a very considerable proportion of this expenditure to intellectual pleasures—to pictures, very commonly, as I have mentioned —to liberal society—and, in a large measure, to books.

Yet, whilst the whole body of the merchants in the place lived in a style which, for its mixed liberality and elegance, resembled that of Venetian merchants, there was little about themselves or their establishments of *external* splendour,— that is, in features which met the public eye. According to the manners of their country, the internal economy of their establishments erred by too much profusion. They had too many servants; and those servants were maintained in a style of luxury and comfort not often matched in the mansions of the nobility. On the other hand, none of these were kept for show or ostentation; and, accordingly, it was not very common to find servants in livery. The women had their fixed and appropriate duties; but the men acted in mixed capacities. Carriages were not very commonly kept; even where from one to two thousand a year might be spent. There was in this town a good deal of society; somewhat better in an intellectual sense than such as is merely literary; for that is, of all societies, the feeblest. From the clergymen, the medical body, and the merchants, was supported a Philosophical Society, who regularly published their Transactions. And some of the members were of a rank in science to correspond with D'Alembert, and others of the leading Parisian wits and literati. Yet so little even here did mere outside splendour and imposing names avail against the palpable evidence of things—against mother-wit and natural robustness of intellect—that the particular physician who chiefly corresponded with the Encyclopedists, spite of his Buffon, his Diderot, his D'Alembert, by whom, in fact, he swore, and whose frothy letters he kept like amulets in his pocket-book, ranked in general esteem as no better than one of the sons of the feeble; and the treason went so far as sometimes to comprehend his correspondents—the great men of the Academy—in the same derogatory estimate; and, in reality, their printed letters are evidences enough that no great wrong was done them—being generally vapid, and as much inferior to Gray's letters, recently made popular by

Mason's life, as these again are, in spirit, and *naïveté*—not to Cowper's only, but to many an unknown woman's in every night of the year—little thought of perhaps by her correspondent, and destined pretty certainly to oblivion.

One word only I shall add, descriptive of my father's library; because in describing his, I describe those of all his class. It was very extensive; comprehending the whole general literature both of England and Scotland for the preceding generation. It was impossible to name a book in the classes of history, biography, voyages and travels, belles lettres, or popular divinity, which was wanting. And to these was added a pretty complete body of local tours (such as Pennant's) and topography; many of which last, being illustrated extensively with plates, were fixed for ever in the recollections of children. But one thing was noticeable,—all the books were English. There was no affectation, either in my father or mother, of decorating their tables with foreign books, not better than thousands of corresponding books in their mother idiom; or of painfully spelling out the contents, obscurely and doubtfully, as must always happen when people have not a familiar *oral* acquaintance with the whole force and value of a language. How often, upon the table of a modern *litterateur*, languid, perhaps, and dyspeptic, so as to be in no condition for enjoying anything, do we see books lying in six or eight different languages, not one of which he has mastered in a degree putting him really and unaffectedly in possession of its idiomatic wealth, or really and seriously in a condition to seek his unaffected pleasures in that language. Besides, what reason has any man looking only for *enjoyment* to import exotic luxuries, until he has a little exhausted those which are native to the soil? Are Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better indeed than all the waters of Israel? True it is, there are different reasons for learning a language; and with some I have here nothing to do. But where the luxuries of literature are the things sought, I can understand why a Dane should learn English; because his native literature is not wide, nor very original; and the best modern writers of his country have a trick of writing in German, with a view to a larger audience. Even a Spaniard, or a Portuguese, might, with much good sense, acquire at some

pains the English or the German ; because his own literature, with a few splendid jewels, is not *mounted* in all departments equally well. But is it for those who have fed on the gifts of Ceres to discard them for acorns ? This is to reverse the old mythological history of human progress. Now, for example, one of the richest departments in English literature happens to be its drama, from the reign of Elizabeth to the Parliamentary War. Such another exhibition of human life under a most picturesque form of manners and a stage of society so rich in original portraiture, and in strength of character, has not existed elsewhere, nor is ever likely to revolve upon ourselves. The tragic drama of Greece is the only section of literature having a corresponding interest or value. Well ; few readers are now much acquainted with this section of literature ; even the powerful sketches of Beaumont and Fletcher, who, in their comic delineations, approach to Shakspeare, lie covered with dust ; and yet, whilst these things are, some twenty years ago we all saw the arid sterilities of Alfieri promoted to a place in every young lady's boudoir. It is true that, in this particular instance, the undue honour paid to this lifeless painter of life and this undramatic dramatist was owing to the accident of his memoirs having been just then published ; and true also it is that the insipid dramas, unable to sustain themselves, have long since sunk back into oblivion. But other writers, not better, are still succeeding ; as must ever be the case with readers not sufficiently masters of a language to bring the true pretensions of a work to any test of *feeling*, and who are for ever mistaking for some pleasure conferred by the writer what is in fact the pleasure [1] naturally attached to the sense of a difficulty overcome.

Not only were there in my father's library no books except English ; but even amongst those there were none connected with the Black Letter literature ; none in fact, of any kind which presupposed study and labour for their enjoyment. It was a poor library, on this account, for a scholar or a man of research. Its use and purpose was mere

[1] There can be no doubt that this particular mistake has been a chief cause of the vastly exaggerated appreciation of much that is mediocre in Greek literature.

enjoyment, instant amusement, without effort or affectation; but still liberal and intellectual. Living in the country, as most of his order did, my father could not look to a theatre for his evening pleasures—or to any public resort. To a theatre he went only when he took his family; and that might be once in five years. Books, gardens on a large scale, and a greenhouse, were the means generally relied on for daily pleasure. The last, in particular, was so commonly attached to a house that it formed a principal room in the country-house, with the modest name of *The Farm*, in which I passed my infancy; it was *the* principal room, as to dimensions, in a spacious house which my father built for himself; and was not wanting, on some scale or other, in any one house of those which I most visited when a school-boy.

I may finish my portrait of my father and his class by saying that Cowper was the poet whom they generally most valued; but Dr. Johnson, who had only just ceased to be a living author, was looked up to with considerable reverence, upon mixed feelings: partly for his courage, his sturdy and uncomplying morality, and, according to *his* views, for his general love of truth; and (as usual) for his diction amongst all who loved the stately, the processional, the artificial, and even the inflated,—with the usual dissent on the part of all who were more open to the natural graces of mother English and idiomatic liveliness. Finally, I may add that there was too little music in those houses in those days; and that the reverence paid to learning,—to scholastic erudition, I mean,—was disproportionate and excessive. Not having had the advantages of a college education themselves, my father and his class looked up with too much admiration to those who had; ascribing to them, with a natural modesty, a superiority greatly beyond the fact; and, not allowing themselves to see that business, and the practice of life, had given to themselves countervailing advantages; nor discerning that too often the scholar had become dull and comatose over his books; whilst the activity of trade, and the strife of practical business, had sharpened their own judgments, set an edge upon their understandings, and increased the mobility of their general powers. As to the general esteem for Cowper, that was inevitable: his picture of an English rural

fire-side, with its long winter evening, the sofa wheeled round to the fire, the massy draperies depending from the windows, the tea-table with its "bubbling and loud-hissing urn," the newspaper and the long debate,—Pitt and Fox ruling the senate, and Erskine the bar,—all this held up a mere mirror to that particular period and their own particular houses; whilst the character of his rural scenery was exactly the same in Cowper's experience of England as in their own. So that, in all these features, they recognised their countryman and their contemporary, who saw things from the same station as themselves; whilst his moral denunciations upon all great public questions then afloat were cast in the very same mould of conscientious principle as their own. In saying *that*, I mean upon all questions where the moral bearings of the case (as in the slave-trade, *lettres de cachet*, etc.) were open to no doubt. They all agreed in being very solicitous in a point which evidently gives no concern at all to a Frenchman, viz. that in her public and foreign acts their country should be in the right. In other respects, upon politics, there were great differences of opinion, especially throughout the American War, until the French Revolution began to change its first features of promise. After *that*, a great monotony of opinion prevailed for many years amongst all of that class.

CHAPTER II

THE AFFLICTION OF CHILDHOOD[1]

About the close of my sixth year, suddenly the first chapter of my life came to a violent termination; that chapter which, even within the gates of recovered Paradise, might merit a remembrance. "*Life is Finished!*" was the secret misgiving of my heart; for the heart of infancy is as apprehensive as that of maturest wisdom in relation to any capital wound inflicted on the happiness. "*Life is Finished! Finished it is!*" was the hidden meaning that, half-unconsciously to myself, lurked within my sighs; and, as bells heard from a distance on a summer evening seem charged at times with an articulate form of words, some monitory message, that rolls round unceasingly, even so for me some noiseless and subterraneous voice seemed to chant continually a secret word, made audible only to my own heart—that "now is the blossoming of life withered for ever." Not that such words formed themselves vocally within my ear, or issued audibly from my lips: but such a whisper stole silently to my heart. Yet in what sense could *that* be true? For an infant not more than six years old, was it possible that the promises of life had been really blighted?

[1] This chapter is mainly a reproduction, but with alterations, omissions, and additions, of portions of the "Suspiria de Profundis" articles in *Blackwood* for 1845; but there are tinges from the autobiographic article in *Tait* for February 1834 and also from the first autobiographic sketch in *Hogg's Instructor* for 1851. The title of the chapter is retained from *Blackwood*.—M.

or its golden pleasures exhausted? Had I seen Rome? Had I read Milton? Had I heard Mozart? No. St. Peter's, the *Paradise Lost*, the divine melodies of *Don Giovanni*, all alike were as yet unrevealed to me, and not more through the accidents of my position than through the necessity of my yet imperfect sensibilities. Raptures there might be in arrear; but raptures are modes of *troubled* pleasure. The peace, the rest, the central security which belong to love that is past all understanding—these could return no more. Such a love, so unfathomable—such a peace, so unvexed by storms, or the fear of storms—had brooded over those four latter years of my infancy, which brought me into special relations to my eldest sister; she being at this period three years older than myself. The circumstances which attended the sudden dissolution of this most tender connection I will here rehearse. And, that I may do so more intelligibly, I will first describe that serene and sequestered position which we occupied in life.[1]

Any expression of personal vanity, intruding upon impassioned records, is fatal to their effect—as being incompatible with that absorption of spirit and that self-oblivion in which only deep passion originates, or can find a genial home. It would, therefore, to myself be exceedingly painful

[1] As occasions arise in these Sketches, when, merely for the purposes of intelligibility, it becomes requisite to call into notice such personal distinctions in my family as otherwise might be unimportant, I here record the entire list of my brothers and sisters, according to their order of succession; and Miltonically I include myself; having surely as much logical right to count myself in the series of my own brothers as Milton could have to pronounce Adam the goodliest of his own sons. First and last, we counted as eight children—viz., four brothers and four sisters, though never counting more than six living at once—viz., 1. *William*, older than myself by more than five years; 2. *Elizabeth;* 3. *Jane*, who died in her 4th year; 4. *Mary;* 5. myself, certainly not the goodliest man of men since born my brothers; 6. *Richard*, known to us all by the household name of *Pink*, who in his after years tilted up and down what might then be called his Britannic Majesty's Oceans (viz., the Atlantic and Pacific) in the quality of midshipman, until Waterloo in one day put an extinguisher on that whole generation of midshipmen, by extinguishing all further call for their services; 7. a second *Jane;* 8. *Henry*, a posthumous child, who belonged to Brasenose College, Oxford, and died about his 26th year.

that even a shadow, or so much as a *seeming* expression of that tendency, should creep into these reminiscences. And yet, on the other hand, it is so impossible, without laying an injurious restraint upon the natural movement of such a narrative, to prevent oblique gleams reaching the reader from such circumstances of luxury or aristocratic elegance as surrounded my childhood, that on all accounts I think it better to tell him, from the first, with the simplicity of truth, in what order of society my family moved at the time from which this preliminary narrative is dated. Otherwise it might happen that, merely by reporting faithfully the facts of this early experience, I could hardly prevent the reader from receiving an impression as of some higher rank than did really belong to my family. And this impression might seem to have been designedly insinuated by myself.

My father was a merchant; not in the sense of Scotland, where it means a retail dealer, one, for instance, who sells groceries in a cellar, but in the English sense, a sense rigorously exclusive; that is, he was a man engaged in *foreign* commerce, and no other; therefore, in *wholesale* commerce, and no other: — which last limitation of the idea is important, because it brings him within the benefit of Cicero's condescending distinction[1]—as one who ought to be despised certainly, but not too intensely to be despised even by a Roman senator. He—this imperfectly despicable man—died at an early age, and very soon after the incidents recorded in this chapter, leaving to his family, then consisting of a wife and six children, an unburdened estate producing exactly £1600 a-year.[2] Naturally, therefore, at the date of my narrative—whilst he was still living—he had an income very much larger, from the addition of current commercial profits. Now, to any man who is acquainted with commercial life as it exists in England, it will readily

[1] Cicero, in a well-known passage of his *Ethics*, speaks of trade as irredeemably base, if petty, but as not so absolutely felonious if wholesale.

[2] His gravestone in the churchyard of St. Anne's, Manchester, bore this inscription: "Thomas Quincey, merchant, who died July 18, 1793, aged 40 years." This information is from a paper by Mr. John Evans in vol. v. (1879) of the Papers and Proceedings of the Manchester Literary Club.—M.

occur, that in an opulent English family of that class—opulent, though not emphatically *rich* in a mercantile estimate—the domestic economy is pretty sure to move upon a scale of liberality altogether unknown amongst the corresponding orders in foreign nations. The establishment of servants, for instance, in such houses, measured even *numerically* against those establishments in other nations, would somewhat surprise the foreign appraiser, simply as interpreting the relative station in society occupied by the English merchant. But this same establishment, when measured by the quality and amount of the provision made for its comfort, and even elegant accommodation, would fill him with twofold astonishment, as interpreting equally the social valuation of the English merchant and also the social valuation of the English servant: for, in the truest sense, England is the paradise of household servants. Liberal housekeeping, in fact, as extending itself to the meanest servants, and the disdain of petty parsimonies, are peculiar to England. And in this respect the families of English merchants, as a class, far outrun the scale of expenditure prevalent, not only amongst the corresponding bodies of continental nations, but even amongst the poorer sections of our own nobility—though confessedly the most splendid in Europe; a fact which, since the period of my infancy, I have had many personal opportunities for verifying both in England and in Ireland. From this peculiar anomaly, affecting the domestic economy of English merchants, there arises a disturbance upon the usual scale for measuring the relations of rank. The equation, so to speak, between rank and the ordinary expressions of rank, which usually runs parallel to the graduations of expenditure, is here interrupted and confounded, so that one rank would be collected from the name of the occupation, and another rank, much higher, from the splendour of the domestic *ménage*. I warn the reader, therefore (or, rather, my explanation has already warned him), that he is not to infer, from any casual indications of luxury or elegance, a corresponding elevation of rank.

We, the children of the house, stood, in fact, upon the very happiest tier in the social scaffolding for all good

influences. The prayer of Agar—"Give me neither poverty nor riches"—was realised for us. That blessing we had, being neither too high nor too low. High enough we were to see models of good manners, of self-respect, and of simple dignity; obscure enough to be left in the sweetest of solitudes. Amply furnished with all the nobler benefits of wealth, with *extra* means of health, of intellectual culture, and of elegant enjoyment, on the other hand, we knew nothing of its social distinctions. Not depressed by the consciousness of privations too sordid, not tempted into restlessness by the consciousness of privileges too aspiring, we had no motives for shame, we had none for pride. Grateful, also, to this hour I am that, amidst luxuries in all things else, we were trained to a Spartan simplicity of diet—that we fared, in fact, very much less sumptuously than the servants. And if (after the model of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius) I should return thanks to Providence for all the separate blessings of my early situation, these four I would single out as worthy of special commemoration—that I lived in a rustic solitude; that this solitude was in England; that my infant feelings were moulded by the gentlest of sisters, and not by horrid, pugilistic brothers; finally, that I and they were dutiful and loving members of a pure, holy, and magnificent church.

The earliest incidents in my life which left stings in my memory so as to be remembered at this day were two, and both before I could have completed my second year; namely, first, a remarkable dream of terrific grandeur about a favourite nurse, which is interesting to myself for this reason—that it demonstrates my dreaming tendencies to have been constitutional, and not dependent upon laudanum[1]; and, secondly, the fact of having connected a profound sense of

[1] It is true that in those days *paregoric elixir* was occasionally given to children in colds; and in this medicine there is a small proportion of laudanum. But no medicine was ever administered to any member of our nursery except under medical sanction; and this, assuredly, would not have been obtained to the exhibition of laudanum in a case such as mine. For I was not more than twenty-one months old; at which age the action of opium is capricious, and therefore perilous.

pathos with the reappearance, very early in the spring, of some crocuses. This I mention as inexplicable; for such annual resurrections of plants and flowers affect us only as memorials, or suggestions of some higher change, and therefore in connection with the idea of death; yet of death I could, at that time, have had no experience whatever.

This, however, I was speedily to acquire. My two eldest sisters—eldest of three *then* living, and also elder than myself—were summoned to an early death. The first who died was Jane, about two years older than myself. She was three and a half, I one and a half, more or less by some trifle that I do not recollect.[1] But death was then scarcely intelligible to me, and I could not so properly be said to suffer sorrow as a sad perplexity. There was another death in the house about the same time—viz., of a maternal grandmother; but, as she had come to us for the express purpose of dying in her daughter's society, and from illness had lived perfectly secluded, our nursery circle knew her but little, and were certainly more affected by the death (which I witnessed) of a beautiful bird—viz., a kingfisher, which had been injured by an accident. With my sister Jane's death (though otherwise, as I have said, less sorrowful than perplexing) there was, however, connected an incident which made a most fearful impression upon myself, deepening my tendencies to thoughtfulness and abstraction beyond what would seem credible for my years. If there was one thing in this world from which, more than from any other, nature had forced me to revolt, it was brutality and violence. Now, a whisper arose in the family that a female servant, who by accident was

[1] The same gravestone, in St. Anne's Churchyard, Manchester, which recorded the date of the death of De Quincey's father in 1793 (see footnote, *ante*, p. 30) recorded the dates of the deaths of the two sisters. The words are "Also of Jane Quincey, daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Quincey, born September 18, 1786, died March 1790. Also of Elizabeth Quincey, their daughter, who died June 2, 1792, aged 9 years." If this is correct, De Quincey, though right in giving the age of his sister Jane, at the time of her death, as three and a half years, seems to be wrong in making her older than himself. She was younger than himself by a whole year,—he being in the fifth year of his age when she died. His memory here seems to have reversed their relations of age.—M.

drawn off from her proper duties to attend my sister Jane for a day or two, had on one occasion treated her harshly, if not brutally; and as this ill-treatment happened within three or four days of her death, so that the occasion of it must have been some fretfulness in the poor child caused by her sufferings, naturally there was a sense of awe and indignation diffused through the family. I believe the story never reached my mother, and possibly it was exaggerated; but upon me the effect was terrific. I did not often see the person charged with this cruelty; but, when I did, my eyes sought the ground; nor could I have borne to look her in the face; not, however, in any spirit that could be called anger. The feeling which fell upon me was a shuddering horror, as upon a first glimpse of the truth that I was in a world of evil and strife. Though born in a large town (the town of Manchester, even then among the largest of the island), I had passed the whole of my childhood, except for the few earliest weeks, in a rural seclusion.[1] With three innocent little sisters for playmates, sleeping always amongst them, and shut up for ever in a silent garden from all knowledge of poverty, or oppression, or outrage, I had not suspected until this moment the true

[1] De Quincey was born in Manchester on the 15th of August 1785, and was baptized on the 23d of September, as appears from the Register of Baptisms in St. Anne's Church of that city. "September 23, Thomas, son of Thomas and Elizabeth Quincey," is the record, showing that his surname in his infancy, and for an indefinite period afterwards, was simply Quincey. Though he was born, as he here distinctly tells us, *in* Manchester (particular street now unknown, though there have been attempts to identify it, and even the particular house in it), the fact, also distinctly mentioned here, that he spent all his infancy, after the first few weeks, in "a rural seclusion," has to be borne in mind. Till 1791 the family residence was a rustic cottage, called *The Farm*, some little way out of Manchester; after which it was *Greenhay*, a mansion or villa which his father had built about a mile out of Manchester, in what was then a rural suburb, though it has long been absorbed into the great town, and now forms a district of the town itself, called commonly *Greenheys*, derived by extension of the name apparently from its original application to one notable mansion. Biographers of De Quincey have till lately been strangely unanimous in the blunder of making him born at Greenhay,—a blunder from which even his tombstone in St. Cuthbert's Churchyard, Edinburgh, is not free. "*Born at Greenhay, near Manchester*," is part of the inscription.—M.

complexion of the world in which myself and my sisters were living. Henceforward the character of my thoughts changed greatly ; for so *representative* are some acts, that one single case of the class is sufficient to throw open before you the whole theatre of possibilities in that direction. I never heard that the woman accused of this cruelty took it at all to heart, even after the event which so immediately succeeded had reflected upon it a more painful emphasis. But for myself, that incident had a lasting revolutionary power in colouring my estimate of life.

So passed away from earth one of those three sisters that made up my nursery playmates ; and so did my acquaintance (if such it could be called) commence with mortality. Yet, in fact, I knew little more of mortality than that Jane had disappeared. She had gone away ; but, perhaps, she would come back. Happy interval of heaven-born ignorance ! Gracious immunity of infancy from sorrow disproportioned to its strength ! I was sad for Jane's absence. But still in my heart I trusted that she would come again. Summer and winter came again—crocuses and roses ; why not little Jane ?

Thus easily was healed, then, the first wound in my infant heart. Not so the second. For thou, dear, noble Elizabeth, around whose ample brow, as often as thy sweet countenance rises upon the darkness, I fancy a *tiara* of light or a gleaming *aureola* [1] in token of thy premature intellectual grandeur —thou whose head, for its superb developments, was the astonishment of science [2]—thou next, but after an interval of

[1] "*Aureola*" :—The *aureola* is the name given in the "Legends of the Christian Saints" to that golden diadem or circlet of supernatural light (that *glory*, as it is commonly called in English) which, amongst the great masters of painting in Italy, surrounded the heads of Christ and of distinguished saints.

[2] "*The astonishment of science*" :—Her medical attendants were Dr. Percival, a well-known literary physician, who had been a correspondent of Condorcet, D'Alembert, etc., and Mr. Charles White, the most distinguished surgeon at that time in the North of England. It was he who pronounced her head to be the finest in its development of any that he had ever seen—an assertion which, to my own knowledge, he repeated in after years, and with enthusiasm. That he had some acquaintance with the subject may be presumed from this, that, at so early a stage of such inquiries, he had published a work on human

happy years, thou also wert summoned away from our nursery; and the night which for me gathered upon that event ran after my steps far into life; and perhaps at this day I resemble little for good or for ill that which else I should have been. Pillar of fire that didst go before me to guide and to quicken—pillar of darkness, when thy countenance was turned away to God, that didst too truly reveal to my dawning fears the secret shadow of death, by what mysterious gravitation was it that *my* heart had been drawn to thine? Could a child, six years old, place any special value upon intellectual forwardness? Serene and capacious as my sister's mind appeared to me upon after review, was *that* a charm for stealing away the heart of an infant? Oh no! I think of it *now* with interest, because it lends, in a stranger's ear, some justification to the excess of my fondness. But then it was lost upon me; or, if not lost, was perceived only through its effects. Hadst thou been an idiot, my sister, not the less I must have loved thee, having that capacious heart—overflowing, even as mine overflowed, with tenderness, strung, even as mine was strung, by the necessity of loving and being loved. This it was which crowned thee with beauty and power:—

> "Love, the holy sense,
> Best gift of God, in thee was most intense."

That lamp of Paradise was, for myself, kindled by reflection from the living light which burned so steadfastly in thee; and never but to thee, never again since *thy* departure, had I power or temptation, courage or desire, to utter the feelings which possessed me. For I was the shyest of

craniology, supported by measurements of heads selected from all varieties of the human species. Meantime, as it would grieve me that any trait of what might seem vanity should creep into this record, I will admit that my sister died of hydrocephalus; and it has been often supposed that the premature expansion of the intellect in cases of that class is altogether morbid—forced on, in fact, by the mere stimulation of the disease. I would, however, suggest, as a possibility, the very opposite order of relation between the disease and the intellectual manifestations. Not the disease may always have caused the preternatural growth of the intellect; but, inversely, this growth of the intellect coming on spontaneously, and outrunning the capacities of the physical structure, may have caused the disease.

children ; and, at all stages of life, a natural sense of personal dignity held me back from exposing the least ray of feelings which I was not encouraged *wholly* to reveal.

It is needless to pursue, circumstantially, the course of that sickness which carried off my leader and companion. She (according to my recollection at this moment) was just as near to nine years as I to six.[1] And perhaps this natural precedency in authority of years and judgment, united to the tender humility with which she declined to assert it, had been amongst the fascinations of her presence. It was upon a Sunday evening, if such conjectures can be trusted, that the spark of fatal fire fell upon that train of predispositions to a brain complaint which had hitherto slumbered within her. She had been permitted to drink tea at the house of a labouring man, the father of a favourite female servant. The sun had set when she returned, in the company of this servant, through meadows reeking with exhalations after a fervent day. From that day she sickened. In such circumstances, a child, as young as myself, feels no anxieties. Looking upon medical men as people privileged, and naturally commissioned, to make war upon pain and sickness, I never had a misgiving about the result. I grieved, indeed, that my sister should lie in bed ; I grieved still more to hear her moan. But all this appeared to me no more than as a night of trouble, on which the dawn would soon arise. O ! moment of darkness and delirium, when the elder nurse awakened me from that delusion, and launched God's thunderbolt at my heart in the assurance that my sister MUST die. Rightly it is said of utter, utter misery, that it "cannot be *remembered*."[2] Itself, as a rememberable thing, is swallowed up in its own chaos. Blank anarchy and confusion of mind fell upon me. Deaf and blind I was, as I reeled under the revelation. I wish not to recall the circumstances of that time, when *my* agony was at its height, and hers, in another sense, was approaching. Enough it is to say, that all

[1] For *six* De Quincey should here have written *seven*. See previous footnotes, p. 33 and p. 34.

[2] "I stood in unimaginable trance
And agony which cannot be remember'd."
Speech of Alhadra, in Coleridge's Remorse.

was soon over; and the morning of that day had at last arrived which looked down upon her innocent face, sleeping the sleep from which there is no awaking, and upon me sorrowing the sorrow for which there is no consolation.

On the day after my sister's death, whilst the sweet temple of her brain was yet unviolated by human scrutiny, I formed my own scheme for seeing her once more. Not for the world would I have made this known, nor have suffered a witness to accompany me. I had never heard of feelings that take the name of "sentimental," nor dreamed of such a possibility. But grief, even in a child, hates the light, and shrinks from human eyes. The house was large enough to have two staircases; and by one of these I knew that about mid-day, when all would be quiet (for the servants dined at one o'clock), I could steal up into her chamber. I imagine that it was about an hour after high noon when I reached the chamber-door; it was locked but the key was not taken away. Entering, I closed the door so softly, that, although it opened upon a hall which ascended through all the storeys, no echo ran along the silent walls. Then, turning round, I sought my sister's face. But the bed had been moved, and the back was now turned towards myself. Nothing met my eyes but one large window, wide open, through which the sun of midsummer at mid-day was showering down torrents of splendour. The weather was dry, the sky was cloudless, the blue depths seemed the express types of infinity; and it was not possible for eye to behold, or for heart to conceive, any symbols more pathetic of life and the glory of life.

Let me pause for one instant in approaching a remembrance so affecting for my own mind, to mention that, in the "Opium Confessions," I endeavoured to explain the reason why death, other conditions remaining the same, is more profoundly affecting in summer than in other parts of the year—so far, at least, as it is liable to any modification at all from accidents of scenery or season. The reason, as I there suggested, lies in the antagonism between the tropical redundancy of life in summer, and the frozen sterilities of the grave. The summer we see, the grave we haunt with our thoughts; the glory is around us, the dark-

ness is within us; and, the two coming into collision, each exalts the other into stronger relief. But, in my case, there was even a subtler reason why the summer had this intense power of vivifying the spectacle or the thoughts of death. And, recollecting it, I am struck with the truth, that far more of our deepest thoughts and feelings pass to us through perplexed combinations of *concrete* objects, pass to us as *involutes* (if I may coin that word) in compound experiences incapable of being disentangled, than ever reach us *directly*, and in their own abstract shapes. It had happened, that amongst our vast nursery collection of books was the Bible illustrated with many pictures. And in long dark evenings, as my three sisters with myself sat by the firelight round the *guard*[1] of our nursery, no book was so much in request amongst us. It ruled us and swayed us as mysteriously as music. Our younger nurse, whom we all loved, would sometimes, according to her simple powers, endeavour to explain what we found obscure. We, the children, were all constitutionally touched with pensiveness; the fitful gloom and sudden lambencies of the room by firelight suited our evening state of feelings; and they suited, also, the divine revelations of power and mysterious beauty which awed us. Above all, the story of a just man—man and yet *not* man, real above all things, and yet shadowy above all things—who had suffered the passion of death in Palestine, slept upon our minds like early dawn upon the waters. The nurse knew and explained to us the chief differences in oriental climates; and all these differences (as it happens) express themselves, more or less, in varying relations to the great accidents and powers of summer. The cloudless sunlights of Syria—those seemed to argue everlasting summer; the disciples plucking the ears of corn—that *must* be summer; but, above all, the very name of Palm Sunday (a festival in the English Church) troubled me like an anthem. "Sunday!" what was *that?* That was the day of peace which masked another peace deeper than the heart of man can comprehend.

[1] "*The guard*":—I know not whether the word is a local one in this sense. What I mean is a sort of fender, four or five feet high, which locks up the fire from too near an approach on the part of children.

"Palms!" what were they? *That* was an equivocal word; palms, in the sense of trophies, expressed the pomps of life; palms, as a product of nature, expressed the pomps of summer. Yet still even this explanation does not suffice; it was not merely by the peace and by the summer, by the deep sound of rest below all rest and of ascending glory, that I had been haunted. It was also because Jerusalem stood near to those deep images both in time and in place. The great event of Jerusalem was at hand when Palm Sunday came; and the scene of that Sunday was near in place to Jerusalem. What then was Jerusalem? Did I fancy it to be the *omphalos* (navel) or physical centre of the earth? Why should *that* affect me? Such a pretension had once been made for Jerusalem, and once for a Grecian city; and both pretensions had become ridiculous, as the figure of the planet became known. Yes; but if not of the earth, yet of mortality, for earth's tenant, Jerusalem, had now become the *omphalos* and absolute centre. Yet how? There, on the contrary, it was, as we infants understood, that mortality had been trampled under foot. True; but, for that very reason, there it was that mortality had opened its very gloomiest crater. There it was, indeed, that the human had risen on wings from the grave; but, for that reason, there also it was that the divine had been swallowed up by the abyss; the lesser star could not rise, before the greater should submit to eclipse. Summer, therefore, had connected itself with death, not merely as a mode of antagonism, but also as a phenomenon brought into intricate relations with death by scriptural scenery and events.

Out of this digression, for the purpose of showing how inextricably my feelings and images of death were entangled with those of summer, as connected with Palestine and Jerusalem, let me come back to the bedchamber of my sister. From the gorgeous sunlight I turned round to the corpse. There lay the sweet childish figure; there the angel face; and, as people usually fancy, it was said in the house that no features had suffered any change. Had they not? The forehead, indeed—the serene and noble forehead—*that* might be the same; but the frozen eyelids, the darkness that seemed to steal from beneath them, the marble lips, the

stiffening hands, laid palm to palm, as if repeating the supplications of closing anguish—could these be mistaken for life? Had it been so, wherefore did I not spring to those heavenly lips with tears and never-ending kisses? But so it was *not*. I stood checked for a moment; awe, not fear, fell upon me; and, whilst I stood, a solemn wind began to blow—the saddest that ear ever heard. It was a wind that might have swept the fields of mortality for a thousand centuries. Many times since, upon summer days, when the sun is about the hottest, I have remarked the same wind arising and uttering the same hollow, solemn, Memnonian,[1] but saintly

[1] "*Memnonian*":—For the sake of many readers, whose hearts may go along earnestly with a record of infant sorrow, but whose course of life has not allowed them much leisure for study, I pause to explain—that the head of Memnon, in the British Museum, that sublime head which wears upon its lips a smile co-extensive with all time and all space, an Æonian smile of gracious love and Panlike mystery, the most diffusive and pathetically divine that the hand of man has created, is represented on the authority of ancient traditions to have uttered at sunrise, or soon after, as the sun's rays had accumulated heat enough to rarify the air within certain cavities in the bust, a solemn and dirge-like series of intonations; the simple explanation being, in its general outline, this—that sonorous currents of air were produced by causing chambers of cold and heavy air to press upon other collections of air, warmed, and therefore rarified, and therefore yielding readily to the pressure of heavier air. Currents being thus established, by artificial arrangements of tubes, a certain succession of notes could be concerted and sustained. Near the Red Sea lie a chain of sand hills, which, by a natural system of grooves inosculating with each other, become vocal under changing circumstances in the position of the sun, etc. I knew a boy who, upon observing steadily, and reflecting upon a phenomenon that met him in his daily experience—viz., that tubes, through which a stream of water was passing, gave out a very different sound according to the varying slenderness or fulness of the current—devised an instrument that yielded a rude hydraulic gamut of sounds; and, indeed, upon this simple phenomenon is founded the use and power of the stethoscope. For exactly as a thin thread of water, trickling through a leaden tube, yields a stridulous and plaintive sound compared with the full volume of sound corresponding to the full volume of water—on parity of principles, nobody will doubt that the current of blood pouring through the tubes of the human frame will utter to the learned ear, when armed with the stethoscope, an elaborate gamut or compass of music, recording the ravages of disease, or the glorious plenitudes of health, as faithfully as the cavities within this ancient Memnonian bust reported this mighty event of sunrise to the rejoicing

swell: it is in this world the one great audible symbol of eternity. And three times in my life have I happened to hear the same sound in the same circumstances—viz., when standing between an open window and a dead body on a summer day.

Instantly, when my ear caught this vast Æolian intonation, when my eye filled with the golden fulness of life, the pomps of the heavens above, or the glory of the flowers below, and turning when it settled upon the frost which overspread my sister's face, instantly a trance fell upon me. A vault seemed to open in the zenith of the far blue sky, a shaft which ran up for ever. I, in spirit, rose as if on billows that also ran up the shaft for ever; and the billows seemed to pursue the throne of God; but *that* also ran before us and fled away continually. The flight and the pursuit seemed to go on for ever and ever. Frost gathering frost, some Sarsar wind of death, seemed to repel me; some mighty relation between God and death dimly struggled to evolve itself from the dreadful antagonism between them; shadowy meanings even yet continue to exercise and torment, in dreams, the deciphering oracle within me. I slept—for how long I cannot say; slowly I recovered my self-possession; and, when I woke, found myself standing, as before, close to my sister's bed.

I have reason to believe that a *very* long interval had elapsed during this wandering or suspension of my perfect mind. When I returned to myself, there was a foot (or I fancied so) on the stairs. I was alarmed; for, if anybody had detected me, means would have been taken to prevent my coming again. Hastily, therefore, I kissed the lips that I should kiss no more, and slunk, like a guilty thing, with stealthy steps from the room. Thus perished the vision, loveliest amongst all the shows which earth has revealed to me; thus mutilated was the parting which should have lasted for ever; tainted thus with fear was that farewell sacred to love and grief, to perfect love and to grief that could not be healed.

world of light and life—or, again, under the sad passion of the dying day, uttered the sweet requiem that belonged to its departure.

O Ahasuerus, everlasting Jew![1] fable or not a fable, thou, when first starting on thy endless pilgrimage of woe—thou, when first flying through the gates of Jerusalem, and vainly yearning to leave the pursuing curse behind thee—couldst not more certainly in the words of Christ have read thy doom of endless sorrow, than I when passing for ever from my sister's room. The worm was at my heart; and, I may say, the worm that could not die. Man is doubtless *one* by some subtle *nexus*, some system of links, that we cannot perceive, extending from the new-born infant to the superannuated dotard: but, as regards many affections and passions incident to his nature at different stages, he is *not* one, but an intermitting creature, ending and beginning anew; the unity of man, in this respect, is co-extensive only with the particular stage to which the passion belongs. Some passions, as that of sexual love, are celestial by one-half of their origin, animal and earthly by the other half. These will not survive their own appropriate stage. But love, which is *altogether* holy, like that between two children, is privileged to revisit by glimpses the silence and the darkness of declining years; and, possibly, this final experience in my sister's bedroom, or some other in which her innocence was concerned, may rise again for me to illuminate the clouds of death.

On the day following this which I have recorded, came a body of medical men to examine the brain, and the particular nature of the complaint; for in some of its symptoms it had shown perplexing anomalies. An hour after the strangers had withdrawn, I crept again to the room; but the door was now locked, the key had been taken away—and I was shut out for ever.

Then came the funeral. I, in the ceremonial character of *mourner*, was carried thither. I was put into a carriage with some gentlemen whom I did not know. They were kind and attentive to me; but naturally they talked of things disconnected with the occasion, and their conversation was a torment. At the church, I was told to hold

[1] "*Everlasting Jew*":—*der ewige Jude*—which is the common German expression for "The Wandering Jew," and sublimer even than our own.

a white handkerchief to my eyes. Empty hypocrisy! What need had *he* of masks or mockeries, whose heart died within him at every word that was uttered? During that part of the service which passed within the church, I made an effort to attend; but I sank back continually into my own solitary darkness, and I heard little consciously, except some fugitive strains from the sublime chapter of St. Paul, which in England is always read at burials.[1]

Lastly came that magnificent liturgical service which the English Church performs at the side of the grave; for this church does not forsake her dead so long as they continue in the upper air, but waits for her last "sweet and solemn farewell"[2] at the side of the grave. There is exposed once again, and for the last time, the coffin. All eyes survey the record of name, of sex, of age, and the day of departure from earth—records how shadowy! and dropped into darkness as messages addressed to worms. Almost at the very last comes the symbolic ritual, tearing and shattering the heart with volleying discharges, peal after peal, from the fine artillery of woe. The coffin is lowered into its home; it has disappeared from all eyes but those that look down into the abyss of the grave. The sacristan stands ready, with his shovel of earth and stones. The priest's voice is heard once more—*earth to earth*—and immediately the dread rattle ascends from the lid of the coffin; *ashes to ashes*—and again the killing sound is heard; *dust to dust*—and the farewell volley announces that the grave, the coffin, the face are sealed up for ever and ever.

Grief! thou art classed amongst the depressing passions. And true it is that thou humblest to the dust, but also thou exaltest to the clouds. Thou shakest as with ague, but also thou steadiest like frost. Thou sickenest the heart, but also thou healest its infirmities. Among the very foremost of mine was morbid sensibility to shame.

[1] First Epistle to Corinthians, chap. xv., beginning at verse 20.

[2] This beautiful expression, I am pretty certain, must belong to Mrs. Trollope; I read it, probably, in a tale of hers connected with the backwoods of America, where the absence of such a farewell must unspeakably aggravate the gloom at any rate belonging to a household separation of that eternal character occurring amongst the shadows of those mighty forests.

And, ten years afterwards, I used to throw my self-reproaches with regard to that infirmity into this shape—viz., that if I were summoned to seek aid for a perishing fellow-creature, and that I could obtain that aid only by facing a vast company of critical or sneering faces, I might, perhaps, shrink basely from the duty. It is true that no such case had ever actually occurred; so that it was a mere romance of casuistry to tax myself with cowardice so shocking. But to feel a doubt was to feel condemnation; and the crime that *might* have been, was in my eyes the crime that *had* been. Now, however, all was changed; and, for anything which regarded my sister's memory, in one hour I received a new heart. Once in Westmoreland I saw a case resembling it. I saw a ewe suddenly put off and abjure her own nature, in a service of love—yes, slough it as completely as ever serpent sloughed his skin. Her lamb had fallen into a deep trench, from which all escape was hopeless without the aid of man. And to a man she advanced, bleating clamorously, until he followed her and rescued her beloved. Not less was the change in myself. Fifty thousand sneering faces would not have troubled me *now* in any office of tenderness to my sister's memory. Ten legions would not have repelled me from seeking her, if there had been a chance that she could be found. Mockery! it was lost upon me. Laughter! I valued it not. And when I was taunted insultingly with "my girlish tears," that word "*girlish*" had no sting for me, except as a verbal echo to the one eternal thought of my heart—that a girl was the sweetest thing which I, in my short life, had known—that a girl it was who had crowned the earth with beauty, and had opened to my thirst fountains of pure celestial love, from which, in this world, I was to drink no more.

Now began to unfold themselves the consolations of solitude, those consolations which only I was destined to taste; now, therefore, began to open upon me those fascinations of solitude, which, when acting as a co-agency with unresisted grief, end in the paradoxical result of making out of grief itself a luxury; such a luxury as finally becomes a snare, overhanging life itself, and the energies of life, with growing menaces. All deep feelings of a *chronic*

class agree in this, that they seek for solitude, and are fed by solitude. Deep grief, deep love, how naturally do these ally themselves with religious feeling! and all three—love, grief, religion—are haunters of solitary places. Love, grief, and the mystery of devotion—what were these without solitude? All day long, when it was not impossible for me to do so, I sought the most silent and sequestered nooks in the grounds about the house, or in the neighbouring fields. The awful stillness oftentimes of summer noons, when no winds were abroad, the appealing silence of gray or misty afternoons—these were fascinations as of witchcraft. Into the woods, into the desert air, I gazed, as if some comfort lay hid in *them*. I wearied the heavens with my inquest of beseeching looks. Obstinately I tormented the blue depths with my scrutiny, sweeping them for ever with my eyes, and searching them for one angelic face that might, perhaps, have permission to reveal itself for a moment.

At this time, and under this impulse of rapacious grief, that grasped at what it could not obtain, the faculty of shaping images in the distance out of slight elements, and grouping them after the yearnings of the heart, grew upon me in morbid excess. And I recall at the present moment one instance of that sort, which may show how merely shadows, or a gleam of brightness, or nothing at all, could furnish a sufficient basis for this creative faculty.

On Sunday mornings I went with the rest of my family to church: it was a church on the ancient model of England, having aisles, galleries,[1] organ, all things ancient and venerable, and the proportions majestic. Here, whilst the congregation knelt through the long litany, as often as we came to that passage, so beautiful amongst many that are so, where God is supplicated on behalf of "all sick persons and young children," and that he would "show his pity upon all prisoners and captives," I wept in secret; and raising my streaming eyes to the upper windows of the galleries, saw, on

[1] "*Galleries*":—These, though condemned on some grounds by the restorers of authentic church architecture, have, nevertheless, this one advantage—that, when the *height* of a church is that dimension which most of all expresses its sacred character, galleries expound and interpret that height.

days when the sun was shining, a spectacle as affecting as ever prophet can have beheld. The *sides* of the windows were rich with storied glass; through the deep purples and crimsons streamed the golden light; emblazonries of heavenly illumination (from the sun) mingling with the earthly emblazonries (from art and its gorgeous colouring) of what is grandest in man. *There* were the apostles that had trampled upon earth, and the glories of earth, out of celestial love to man. *There* were the martyrs that had borne witness to the truth through flames, through torments, and through armies of fierce, insulting faces. *There* were the saints who, under intolerable pangs, had glorified God by meek submission to his will. And all the time, whilst this tumult of sublime memorials held on as the deep chords from some accompaniment in the bass, I saw through the wide central field of the window, where the glass was *un*coloured, white, fleecy clouds sailing over the azure depths of the sky; were it but a fragment or a hint of such a cloud, immediately under the flash of my sorrow-haunted eye, it grew and shaped itself into visions of beds with white lawny curtains; and in the beds lay sick children, dying children, that were tossing in anguish, and weeping clamorously for death. God, for some mysterious reason, could not suddenly release them from their pain; but he suffered the beds, as it seemed, to rise slowly through the clouds; slowly the beds ascended into the chambers of the air; slowly also his arms descended from the heavens, that he and his young children, whom in Palestine, once and for ever, he had blessed, though they *must* pass slowly through the dreadful chasm of separation, might yet meet the sooner. These visions were self-sustained. These visions needed not that any sound should speak to me, or music mould my feelings. The hint from the litany, the fragment from the clouds—those and the storied windows were sufficient. But not the less the blare of the tumultuous organ wrought its own separate creations. And oftentimes in anthems, when the mighty instrument threw its vast columns of sound, fierce yet melodious, over the voices of the choir—high in arches, when it seemed to rise, surmounting and overriding the strife of the vocal parts, and gathering by strong coercion the total storm into unity—sometimes I

seemed to rise and walk triumphantly upon those clouds which, but a moment before, I had looked up to as mementos of prostrate sorrow; yes, sometimes under the transfigurations of music, felt of grief itself as of a fiery chariot for mounting victoriously above the causes of grief.

God speaks to children, also, in dreams, and by the oracles that lurk in darkness. But in solitude, above all things, when made vocal to the meditative heart by the truths and services of a national church, God holds with children "communion undisturbed." Solitude, though it may be silent as light, is, like light, the mightiest of agencies; for solitude is essential to man. All men come into this world *alone;* all leave it *alone.* Even a little child has a dread, whispering consciousness, that, if he should be summoned to travel into God's presence, no gentle nurse will be allowed to lead him by the hand, nor mother to carry him in her arms, nor little sister to share his trepidations. King and priest, warrior and maiden, philosopher and child, all must walk those mighty galleries alone. The solitude, therefore, which in this world appals or fascinates a child's heart, is but the echo of a far deeper solitude, through which already he has passed, and of another solitude, deeper still, through which he *has* to pass: reflex of one solitude—prefiguration of another.

Oh, burden of solitude, that cleavest to man through every stage of his being! in his birth, which *has* been—in his life, which *is*—in his death, which *shall* be—mighty and essential solitude! that wast, and art, and art to be; thou broodest, like the Spirit of God moving upon the surface of the deeps, over every heart that sleeps in the nurseries of Christendom. Like the vast laboratory of the air, which, seeming to be nothing, or less than the shadow of a shade, hides within itself the principles of all things, solitude for the meditating child is the Agrippa's mirror of the unseen universe. Deep is the solitude of millions who, with hearts welling forth love, have none to love them. Deep is the solitude of those who, under secret griefs, have none to pity them. Deep is the solitude of those who, fighting with doubts or darkness, have none to counsel them. But deeper than the deepest of these solitudes is that which broods over childhood under

the passion of sorrow—bringing before it, at intervals, the final solitude which watches for it, and is waiting for it within the gates of death. Oh, mighty and essential solitude, that wast, and art, and art to be ! thy kingdom is made perfect in the grave ; but even over those that keep watch outside the grave, like myself, an infant of six years old, thou stretchest out a sceptre of fascination.

DREAM-ECHOES OF THESE INFANT EXPERIENCES[1]

[*Notice to the Reader.*—The sun, in rising or setting, would produce little effect if he were defrauded of his rays, and their infinite reverberations. "Seen through a fog," says Sara Coleridge, the noble daughter of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "the golden, beaming sun looks like a dull orange, or a red billiard ball."—*Introd. to Biog. Lit.*, p. clxii. And upon this same analogy, psychological experiences of deep suffering or joy first attain their entire fulness of expression when they are reverberated from dreams. The reader must therefore suppose me at Oxford ; more than twelve years are gone by ; I am in the glory of youth : but I have now first tampered with opium ; and now first the agitations of my childhood reopened in strength ; now first they swept in upon the brain with power and the grandeur of recovered life.]

Once again, after twelve years' interval, the nursery of my childhood expanded before me : my sister was moaning in bed ; and I was beginning to be restless with fears not intelligible to myself. Once again the elder nurse, but now dilated to colossal proportions, stood as upon some Grecian stage with her uplifted hand, and, like the superb Medea towering amongst her children in the nursery at Corinth,[2] smote me senseless to the

[1] The paragraph thus introduced with a sub-title, and with a special explanatory notice in small type, written for it in 1853, is taken from the same "Suspiria de Profundis" papers in *Blackwood* of 1845 which had supplied the preceding text of this chapter ; but a good deal of the matter intervening in the "Suspiria de Profundis" papers between the immediately preceding paragraph of the text and this of the *Dream Echoes* has been thrown out. The reader must observe the instruction of the small type notice, and imagine the Dream Echoes to be at Oxford in 1804.—M.

[2] Euripides.

ground. Again I am in the chamber with my sister's corpse, again the pomps of life rise up in silence, the glory of summer, the Syrian sunlights, the frost of death. Dream forms itself mysteriously within dream; within these Oxford dreams remoulds itself continually the trance in my sister's chamber — the blue heavens, the everlasting vault, the soaring billows, the throne steeped in the thought (but not the sight) of "*Who* might sit thereon"; the flight, the pursuit, the irrecoverable steps of my return to earth. Once more the funeral procession gathers; the priest in his white surplice stands waiting with a book by the side of an open grave; the sacristan is waiting with his shovel; the coffin has sunk; the *dust to dust* has descended. Again I was in the church on a heavenly Sunday morning. The golden sunlight of God slept amongst the heads of his apostles, his martyrs, his saints; the fragment from the litany, the fragment from the clouds, awoke again the lawny beds that went up to scale the heavens— awoke again the shadowy arms that moved downward to meet them. Once again arose the swell of the anthem, the burst of the Hallelujah chorus, the storm, the trampling movement of the choral passion, the agitation of my own trembling sympathy, the tumult of the choir, the wrath of the organ. Once more I, that wallowed in the dust, became he that rose up to the clouds. And now all was bound up into unity; the first state and the last were melted into each other as in some sunny, glorifying haze. For high in heaven hovered a gleaming host of faces, veiled with wings, around the pillows of the dying children. And such beings sympathise equally with sorrow that grovels, and with sorrow that soars. Such beings pity alike the children that are languishing in death, and the children that live only to languish in tears.

DREAM-ECHOES FIFTY YEARS LATER[1]

[In this instance the echoes, that rendered back the infant experience, might be interpreted by the reader as connected with a *real* ascent of the Brocken; which was not the case. It was an ascent through all its circumstances executed in dreams, which, under advanced stages in the development of opium, repeat with marvellous accuracy the longest succession of phenomena derived either from reading or from actual experience. That softening and spiritualising haze which belongs at any rate to the action of dreams, and to the transfigurings worked upon troubled remembrances by retrospects so vast as those of fifty years, was in this instance greatly aided to my own feelings by the alliance with the ancient phantom of the forest-mountain in North Germany. The playfulness of the scene is the very evoker of the solemn remembrances that lie hidden below. The half-sportive interlusory revealings of the symbolic tend to the same effect. One part of the effect from the symbolic is dependent upon the great catholic principle of the *Idem in alio.* The symbol restores the theme, but under new combinations of form or colouring; gives back, but changes; restores, but idealises.]

Ascend with me on this dazzling Whitsunday the Brocken of North Germany. The dawn opened in cloudless beauty; it is a dawn of bridal June; but, as the hours advanced, her youngest sister April, that sometimes cares little for racing across both frontiers of May—the rearward frontier, and the vanward frontier—frets the bridal lady's sunny temper with sallies of wheeling and careering showers, flying and pursuing, opening and closing, hiding and restoring. On such a morning, and reaching the summits of the forest-mountain about sunrise, we shall have one chance the more for seeing the famous Spectre of the

[1] This also is a shred from the "Suspiria de Profundis" articles in *Blackwood* of 1845, made to do duty for a new purpose, and taken from a part of these articles a long way ahead of that which supplied the preceding extract. Strictly, as this second set of *Dream Echoes* had been in print in 1845, they were only forty-one years after the preceding Oxford Dream Echoes of 1804; but De Quincey redates them for his purpose in 1853—which *was* about "fifty years later" than 1804. Altogether, his adaptation of this shred from the "Suspiria" to its present connexion is rather forced.—M.

Brocken.[1] Who and what is he? He is a solitary apparition, in the sense of loving solitude; else he is not always solitary in his personal manifestations, but, on proper occasions, has been known to unmask a strength quite sufficient to alarm those who had been insulting him.

Now, in order to test the nature of this mysterious apparition, we will try two or three experiments upon him. What we fear, and with some reason, is, that, as he lived so many ages with foul Pagan sorcerers, and witnessed so many centuries of dark idolatries, his heart may have been

[1] "*Spectre of the Brocken*":—This very striking phenomenon has been continually described by writers, both German and English, for the last fifty years. Many readers, however, will not have met with these descriptions; and on *their* account I add a few words in explanation, referring them for the best scientific comment on the case to Sir David Brewster's "Natural Magic." The spectre takes the shape of a human figure, or, if the visitors are more than one, then the spectres multiply; they arrange themselves on the blue ground of the sky, or the dark ground of any clouds that may be in the right quarter, or perhaps they are strongly relieved against a curtain of rock, at a distance of some miles, and always exhibiting gigantic proportions. At first, from the distance and the colossal size, every spectator supposes the appearance to be quite independent of himself. But very soon he is surprised to observe his own motions and gestures mimicked: and wakens to the conviction that the phantom is but a dilated reflection of himself. This Titan amongst the apparitions of earth is exceedingly capricious, vanishing abruptly for reasons best known to himself, and more coy in coming forward than the Lady Echo of Ovid. One reason why he is seen so seldom must be ascribed to the concurrence of conditions under which only the phenomenon can be manifested; the sun must be near to the horizon (which of itself implies a time of day inconvenient to a person starting from a station as distant as Elbingerode); the spectator must have his back to the sun; and the air must contain some vapour, but *partially* distributed. Coleridge ascended the Brocken on the Whitsunday of 1799, with a party of English students from Gottingen, but failed to see the phantom; afterwards in England (and under the three same conditions) he saw a much rarer phenomenon, which he described in the following lines:—

> "Such thou art as when
> The woodman winding westward up the glen
> At wintry dawn, when o'er the sheep-track's maze
> The viewless snow-mist weaves a glistening haze,
> Sees full before him, gliding without tread,
> An image with a glory round its head;
> This shade he worships for its golden hues,
> And *makes* (not knowing) that which he pursues."

corrupted; and that even now his faith may be wavering or impure. We will try.

Make the sign of the cross, and observe whether he repeats it (as on Whitsunday[1] he surely ought to do). Look! he *does* repeat it; but these driving April showers perplex the images, and *that*, perhaps, it is which gives him the air of one who acts reluctantly or evasively. Now, again, the sun shines more brightly, and the showers have all swept off like squadrons of cavalry to the rear. We will try him again.

Pluck an anemone, one of these many anemones which was once called the sorcerer's flower,[2] and bore a part, perhaps, in this horrid ritual of fear; carry it to that stone which mimics the outline of a heathen altar, and once was called the sorcerer's altar[2]; then, bending your knee, and raising your right hand to God, say—"Father which art in heaven, this lovely anemone, that once glorified the worship of fear, has travelled back into thy fold; this altar, which once reeked with bloody rites to Cortho, has long been re-baptized into thy holy service. The darkness is gone; the cruelty is gone which the darkness bred; the moans have passed away which the victims uttered; the cloud has vanished which once sat continually upon their graves, cloud of protestation that ascended for ever to thy throne from the tears of the defenceless, and from the anger of the just. And lo! we—I thy servant, and this dark phantom, whom for one hour on this thy festival of Pentecost I make *my* servant—render thee united worship in this thy recovered temple."

Lo! the apparition plucks an anemone, and places it on

[1] "*On Whitsunday*":—It is singular, and perhaps owing to the temperature and weather likely to prevail in that early part of summer, that more appearances of the spectre have been witnessed on Whitsunday than on any other day.

[2] "*The sorcerer's flower*" and "*the sorcerer's altar*":—These are names still clinging to the anemone of the Brocken, and to an altar-shaped fragment of granite near one of the summits; and there is no doubt that they both connect themselves, through links of ancient tradition, with the gloomy realities of Paganism, when the whole Hartz and the Brocken formed for a very long time the last asylum to a ferocious but perishing idolatry.

the altar ; he also bends his knee, he also raises his right hand to God. Dumb he is ; but sometimes the dumb serve God acceptably. Yet still it occurs to you, that perhaps on this high festival of the Christian church he may have been overruled by supernatural influence into confession of his homage, having so often been made to bow and bend his knee at murderous rites. In a service of religion he may be timid. Let us try him, therefore, with an earthly passion, where he will have no bias either from favour or from fear.

If, then, once in childhood you suffered an affliction that was ineffable ; if once, when powerless to face such an enemy, you were summoned to fight with the tiger that couches within the separations of the grave—in that case, after the example of Judea,[1] sitting under her palm-tree to weep, but sitting with her head veiled, do you also veil your head. Many years are passed away since then ; and perhaps you were a little ignorant thing at that time, hardly above six years old. But your heart was deeper than the Danube ; and, as was your love, so was your grief. Many years are gone since that darkness settled on your head ; many summers, many winters ; yet still its shadows wheel round upon you at intervals, like these April showers upon this glory of bridal June. Therefore now, on this dovelike morning of Pentecost, do you veil your head like Judea in memory of that transcendent woe, and in testimony that, indeed, it surpassed all utterance of words. Immediately you see that the apparition of the Brocken veils *his* head, after the model of Judea weeping under her palm-tree, as if he also had a human heart ; and as if *he* also, in childhood, having suffered an affliction which was ineffable, wished by these mute symbols to breathe a sigh towards heaven in memory of that transcendent woe, and by way of record, though many a year after, that it was indeed unutterable by words.

[1] On the Roman coins.

CHAPTER III

INTRODUCTION TO THE WORLD OF STRIFE[1]

So, then, one chapter in my life had finished. Already, before the completion of my sixth year, this first chapter had run its circle, had rendered up its music to the final chord—might seem even, like ripe fruit from a tree, to have detached itself for ever from all the rest of the arras that was shaping itself within my loom of life. No Eden of lakes and forest-lawns, such as the *mirage* suddenly evokes in Arabian sands—no pageant of air-built battlements and towers, that ever burned in dream-like silence amongst the vapours of summer sunsets, mocking and repeating with celestial pencil "the fuming vanities of earth"—could leave behind it the mixed impression of so much truth combined with so much absolute delusion. Truest of all things it seemed by the excess of that happiness which it had sustained: most fraudulent it seemed of all things, when looked back upon as some mysterious parenthesis in the current of life, "self-withdrawn into a wondrous depth," hurrying as if with headlong malice to extinction, and alienated by *every* feature from the new aspects of life that seemed to await me. Were it not in the bitter corrosion of heart that I was called upon to face, I should have carried over to the present no connecting link whatever from the past. Mere reality in this fretting it was, and the undeniableness of its too potent remembrances, that forbade me

[1] A recast, with abridgments and alterations, of the matter of a series of articles in *Hogg's Instructor* for 1851 and 1852, all under the title of "A Sketch from Childhood."—M.

to regard this burnt-out inaugural chapter of my life as no chapter at all, but a pure exhalation of dreams. Misery is a guarantee of truth too substantial to be refused: else, by its determinate evanescence, the total experience would have worn the character of a fantastic illusion.

Well it was for me at this period, if well it were for me to live at all, that from any continued contemplation of my misery I was forced to wean myself, and suddenly to assume the harness of life. Else, under the morbid languishing of grief, and of what the Romans called *desiderium* (the yearning too obstinate after one irrecoverable face), too probably I should have pined away into an early grave. Harsh was my awaking; but the rough febrifuge which this awaking administered broke the strength of my sickly reveries through a period of more than two years; by which time, under the natural expansion of my bodily strength, the danger had passed over.

In the first chapter[1] I have rendered solemn thanks for having been trained amongst the gentlest of sisters, and not under "horrid pugilistic brothers." Meantime, one such brother I had: senior by much to myself, and the stormiest of his class[2]; him I will immediately present to the reader; for up to this point of my narrative he may be described as a stranger even to myself. Odd as it sounds, I had at this time both a brother and a father, neither of whom would have been able to challenge me as a relative, nor I *him*, had we happened to meet on the public roads.

In my father's case, this arose from the accident of his having lived abroad for a space that, measured against *my* life, was a very long one. First, he lived for months in Portugal, at Lisbon, and at Cintra; next in Madeira; then in the West Indies; sometimes in Jamaica, sometimes in St. Kitt's; courting the supposed benefit of hot climates in his complaint of pulmonary consumption. He had, indeed, repeatedly returned to England, and met my mother at watering-places on the south coast of Devonshire, etc. But I, as a younger child, had not been one of the party selected for such excursions from home. And now, at last, when all had

[1] Now Chapter II.—M.

[2] William Quincey. See footnote, *ante*, p. 29.—M.

proved unavailing, he was coming home to die amongst his family, in his thirty-ninth year. My mother had gone to await his arrival at the port (whatever port) to which the West India packet should bring him; and amongst the deepest recollections which I connect with that period, is one derived from the night of his arrival at Greenhay.

It was a summer evening of unusual solemnity. The servants, and four of us children, were gathered for hours, on the lawn before the house, listening for the sound of wheels. Sunset came—nine, ten, eleven o'clock, and nearly another hour had passed—without a warning sound; for Greenhay, being so solitary a house, formed a *terminus ad quem*, beyond which was nothing but a cluster of cottages, composing the little hamlet of Greenhill; so that any sound of wheels coming from the winding lane which then connected us with the Rusholme Road carried with it, of necessity, a warning summons to prepare for visitors at Greenhay. No such summons had yet reached us; it was nearly midnight; and, for the last time, it was determined that we should move in a body out of the grounds, on the chance of meeting the travelling party, if, at so late an hour, it could yet be expected to arrive. In fact, to our general surprise, we met it almost immediately, but coming at so slow a pace, that the fall of the horses' feet was not audible until we were close upon them. I mention the case for the sake of the undying impressions which connected themselves with the circumstances. The first notice of the approach was the sudden emerging of horses' heads from the deep gloom of the shady lane; the next was the mass of white pillows against which the dying patient was reclining. The hearse-like pace at which the carriage moved recalled the overwhelming spectacle of that funeral which had so lately formed part in the most memorable event of my life. But these elements of awe, that might at any rate have struck forcibly upon the mind of a child, were for me, in my condition of morbid nervousness, raised into abiding grandeur by the antecedent experiences of that particular summer night. The listening for hours to the sounds from horses' hoofs upon distant roads, rising and falling, caught and lost, upon the gentle undulation of such fitful airs as might be stirring—the peculiar solemnity of the

hours succeeding to sunset—the glory of the dying day—the gorgeousness which, by description, so well I knew of sunset in those West Indian islands from which my father was returning—the knowledge that he returned only to die—the almighty pomp in which this great idea of Death apparelled itself to my young sorrowing heart—the corresponding pomp in which the antagonistic idea, not less mysterious, of life, rose, as if on wings, amidst tropic glories and floral pageantries, that seemed even *more* solemn and pathetic than the vapoury plumes and trophies of mortality—all this chorus of restless images, or of suggestive thoughts, gave to my father's return, which else had been fitted only to interpose one transitory red-letter day in the calendar of a child, the shadowy power of an ineffaceable agency among my dreams. This, indeed, was the one sole memorial which restores my father's image to me as a personal reality. Otherwise, he would have been for me a bare *nominis umbra*. He languished, indeed, for weeks upon a sofa; and during that interval, it happened naturally, from my repose of manners, that I was a privileged visitor to him throughout his waking hours. I was also present at his bedside in the closing hour of his life, which exhaled quietly, amidst snatches of delirious conversation with some imaginary visitors.[1]

My brother was a stranger from causes quite as little to be foreseen, but seeming quite as natural after they had really occurred. In an early stage of his career, he had been found wholly unmanageable. His genius for mischief amounted to inspiration: it was a divine *afflatus* which drove him in that direction; and such was his capacity for riding in whirlwinds and directing storms, that he made it his trade to create them, as a νεφεληγερετα Ζευς, a cloud-compelling Jove, in order that he *might* direct them. For this, and other reasons, he had been sent to the Grammar School of Louth, in Lincolnshire—one of those many old classic institutions which form the peculiar[2] glory of Eng-

[1] The date of his death was 18th July 1793. Though De Quincey speaks of him as having been then "in his thirty-ninth year," the inscription on his tombstone in Manchester says "aged 40 years." See footnote, *ante*, p. 30.—M.

[2] "*Peculiar*":—viz., as *endowed* foundations to which those resort

land. To box, and to box under the severest restraint of honourable laws, was in those days a mere necessity of schoolboy life at *public* schools; and hence the superior manliness, generosity, and self-control, of those generally who had benefited by such discipline—so systematically hostile to all meanness, pusillanimity, or indirectness. Cowper, in his "Tyrocinium," is far from doing justice to our great public schools. Himself disqualified, by delicacy of temperament, for reaping the benefits from such a warfare, and having suffered too much in his own Westminster experience, he could not judge them from an impartial station; but I, though ill enough adapted to an atmosphere so stormy, yet having tried both classes of schools, public and private, am compelled in mere conscience to give my vote (and if I had a thousand votes, to give *all* my votes) for the former.

Fresh from such a training as this, and at a time when his additional five or six years availed nearly to make *his* age the double of mine, my brother very naturally despised me; and, from his exceeding frankness, he took no pains to conceal that he did. Why should he? Who was it that could have a right to feel aggrieved by his contempt? Who, if not myself? But it happened, on the contrary, that I had a perfect craze for being despised. I doted on it; and considered contempt a sort of luxury that I was in continual fear of losing. Why not? Wherefore should any rational person shrink from contempt, if it happen to form the tenure by which he holds his repose in life? The cases, which are cited from comedy, of such a yearning after contempt, stand upon a footing altogether different: *there* the contempt is wooed as a serviceable ally and tool of religious hypocrisy. But, to me, at that era of life, it formed the main guarantee of an unmolested repose: and security there was not, on any lower terms, for the *latentis semita vitæ*. The slightest

who are rich and pay, and those also who, being poor, cannot pay, or cannot pay so much. This most honourable distinction amongst the services of England from ancient times to the interests of education—a service absolutely unapproached by any one nation of Christendom—is amongst the foremost cases of that remarkable class which make England, while often the most aristocratic, yet also, for many noble purposes, the most democratic of lands.

approach to any favourable construction of my intellectual pretensions alarmed me beyond measure ; because it pledged me in a manner with the hearer to support this first attempt by a second, by a third, by a fourth—O heavens ! there is no saying how far the horrid man might go in his unreasonable demands upon me. I groaned under the weight of his expectations ; and, if I laid but the first round of such a staircase, why, then, I saw in vision a vast Jacob's ladder towering upwards to the clouds, mile after mile, league after league ; and myself running up and down this ladder, like any fatigue party of Irish hodmen, to the top of any Babel which my wretched admirer might choose to build. But I nipped the abominable system of extortion in the very bud, by refusing to take the first step. The man could have no pretence, you know, for expecting me to climb the third or fourth round, when I had seemed quite unequal to the first. Professing the most absolute bankruptcy from the very beginning, giving the man no sort of hope that I would pay even one farthing in the pound, I never could be made miserable by unknown responsibilities.

Still, with all this passion for being despised, which was so essential to my peace of mind, I found at times an altitude—a starry altitude—in the station of contempt for me assumed by my brother that nettled me. Sometimes, indeed, the mere necessities of dispute carried me, before I was aware of my own imprudence, so far up the staircase of Babel, that my brother was shaken for a moment in the infinity of his contempt : and, before long, when my superiority in some bookish accomplishments displayed itself, by results that could not be entirely dissembled, mere foolish human nature forced me into some trifle of exultation at these retributory triumphs. But more often I was disposed to grieve over them. They tended to shake that solid foundation of utter despicableness upon which I relied so much for my freedom from anxiety ; and, therefore, upon the whole, it was satisfactory to my mind that my brother's opinion of me, after any little transient oscillation, gravitated determinately back towards that settled contempt which had been the result of his original inquest. The pillars of Hercules upon which rested the vast edifice of his scorn were these

two—1st, my physics: he denounced me for effeminacy; 2d, he assumed, and even postulated as a *datum*, which I myself could never have the face to refuse, my general idiocy. Physically, therefore, and intellectually, he looked upon me as below notice; but, *morally*, he assured me that he would give me a written character of the very best description, whenever I chose to apply for it. "You're honest," he said; "you're willing, though lazy; you *would* pull, if you had the strength of a flea; and, though a monstrous coward, you don't run away." My own demurs to these harsh judgments were not so many as they might have been. The idiocy I confessed; because, though positive that I was not uniformly an idiot, I felt inclined to think that, in a majority of cases, I really *was;* and there were more reasons for thinking so than the reader is yet aware of. But, as to the effeminacy, I denied it *in toto;* and with good reason, as will be seen. Neither did my brother pretend to have any experimental proofs of it. The ground he went upon was a mere *à priori* one—viz., that I had always been tied to the apron-string of women or girls; which amounted at most to this—that, by training and the natural tendency of circumstances, I *ought* to be effeminate: that is, there was reason to expect beforehand that I *should* be so; but, then, the more merit in me, if, in spite of such reasonable presumptions, I really were *not*. In fact, my brother soon learned, by a daily experience, how entirely he might depend upon me for carrying out the most audacious of his own warlike plans; such plans it is true that I abominated; but *that* made no difference in the fidelity with which I tried to fulfil them.

This eldest brother of mine was in all respects a remarkable boy. Haughty he was, aspiring, immeasurably active; fertile in resources as Robinson Crusoe; but also full of quarrel as it is possible to imagine; and, in default of any other opponent, he would have fastened a quarrel upon his own shadow for presuming to run before him when going westwards in the morning, whereas, in all reason, a shadow, like a dutiful child, ought to keep deferentially in rear of that majestic substance which is the author of its existence. Books he detested, one and all, excepting only such as he happened to write himself. And these were not a few. On

all subjects known to man, from the Thirty-nine Articles of our English Church, down to pyrotechnics, legerdemain, magic, both black and white, thaumaturgy, and necromancy, he favoured the world (which world was the nursery where I lived amongst my sisters) with his select opinions. On this last subject especially—of necromancy—he was very great; witness his profound work, though but a fragment, and, unfortunately, long since departed to the bosom of Cinderella, entitled, "How to raise a Ghost; and when you've got him down, how to keep him down." To which work he assured us, that some most learned and enormous man, whose name was a foot and a-half long, had promised him an appendix; which appendix treated of the Red Sea and Solomon's signet-ring; with forms of *mittimus* for ghosts that might be refractory; and probably a riot act, for any *émeute* amongst ghosts inclined to raise barricades; since he often thrilled our young hearts by supposing the case (not at all unlikely, he affirmed), that a federation, a solemn league and conspiracy, might take place amongst the infinite generations of ghosts against the single generation of men at any one time composing the garrison of earth. The Roman phrase for expressing that a man had died—viz., "*Abiit ad plures*" (He has gone over to the majority)—my brother explained to us; and we easily comprehended that any one generation of the living human race, even if combined, and acting in concert, must be in a frightful minority, by comparison with all the incalculable generations that had trod this earth before us. The Parliament of living men, Lords and Commons united, what a miserable array against the Upper and Lower House composing the Parliament of ghosts! Perhaps the Pre-Adamites would constitute one wing in such a ghostly army. My brother, dying in his sixteenth year, was far enough from seeing or foreseeing Waterloo; else he might have illustrated this dreadful duel of the living human race with its ghostly predecessors, by the awful apparition which at three o'clock in the afternoon, on the 18th of June, 1815, the mighty contest at Waterloo must have assumed to eyes that watched over the trembling interests of man. The English army, about that time in the great agony of its strife, was thrown into squares; and under that arrangement, which

condensed and contracted its apparent numbers within a few black geometrical diagrams, how frightfully narrow—how spectral did its slender quadrangles appear at a distance, to any philosophic spectators that knew the amount of human interests confided to that army, and the hopes for Christendom that even were trembling in the balance! Such a disproportion, it seems, might exist, in the case of a ghostly war, between the harvest of possible results and the slender band of reapers that were to gather it. And there was even a worse peril than any analogous one that has been *proved* to exist at Waterloo. A British surgeon, indeed, in a work of two octavo volumes, has endeavoured to show that a conspiracy was traced at Waterloo, between two or three foreign regiments, for kindling a panic in the heat of the battle, by flight, and by a sustained blowing up of tumbrils, under the miserable purpose of shaking the British steadiness. But the evidences are not clear; whereas my brother insisted that the presence of sham men, distributed extensively amongst the human race, and meditating treason against us all, had been demonstrated to the satisfaction of all true philosophers. Who were these shams and make-believe men? They were, in fact, people that had been dead for centuries, but that, for reasons best known to themselves, had returned to this upper earth, walked about amongst us, and were undistinguishable, except by the most learned of necromancers, from authentic men of flesh and blood. I mention this for the sake of illustrating the fact, of which the reader will find a singular instance in the foot-note attached, that the same crazes are everlastingly revolving upon men.[1]

[1] Five years ago, during the carnival of universal anarchy equally amongst doers and thinkers, a closely-printed pamphlet was published with this title, "A New Revelation; or the Communion of the Incarnate Dead with the Unconscious Living. Important Fact, without trifling Fiction, by HIM." I have not the pleasure of knowing HIM; but certainly I must concede to HIM, that he writes like a man of extreme sobriety, upon his extravagant theme. He is angry with Swedenborg, as might be expected, for his chimeras; some of which, however, of late years have signally altered their aspect; but as to HIM, there is no chance that he should be occupied with chimeras, because (p. 6) "he has met with some who have acknowledged the

This hypothesis, however, like a thousand others, when it happened that they engaged no durable sympathy from his nursery audience, he did not pursue. For some time he turned his thoughts to philosophy, and read lectures to us every night upon some branch or other of physics. This undertaking arose upon some one of us envying or admiring flies for their power of walking upon the ceiling. "Pooh!" he said, "they are impostors; they pretend to do it, but they can't do it as it ought to be done. Ah! you should see *me* standing upright on the ceiling, with my head downwards, for half-an-hour together, meditating profoundly." My sister Mary remarked, that we should all be very glad to see him in that position. "If that's the case," he replied, "it's very well that all is ready, except as to a strap or two." Being an excellent skater, he had first imagined that, if held up until he had started, he might then, by taking a bold sweep ahead, keep himself in position through the continued impetus of skating. But this he found not to answer; because, as he observed, "the friction was too retarding from the plaster of Paris; but the case would be very different if the ceiling were coated with ice." As it was *not*, he changed his plan. The true secret, he now discovered, was this: he would consider himself in the light of a humming-top; he would make an apparatus (and he made it) for having himself launched, like a top, upon the ceiling, and regularly spun. Then the vertiginous motion of the human top would overpower the force of gravitation. He should, of course, spin upon his own axis, and sleep upon his own axis—perhaps he might even dream upon it; and he laughed at "those scoundrels, the flies," that never improved in their pretended

fact of their having come from the dead"—*habes confitentem reum*. Few, however, are endowed with so much candour; and, in particular, for the honour of literature, it grieves me to find, by p. 10, that the largest number of these shams, and perhaps the most uncandid, are to be looked for amongst "publishers and printers," of whom, it seems, "the great majority" are mere forgeries; a very few speak frankly about the matter, and say they don't care who knows it, which, to my thinking, is impudence; but by far the larger section doggedly deny it, and call a policeman, if you persist in charging them with being shams. Some differences there are between my brother and HIM, but in the great outline of their views they coincide.

art, nor made anything of it. The principle was now discovered; "and, of course," he said, "if a man can keep it up for five minutes, what's to hinder him from doing so for five months?" "Certainly, nothing that I can think of," was the reply of my sister, whose scepticism, in fact, had not settled upon the five months, but altogether upon the five minutes. The apparatus for spinning him, however, perhaps from its complexity, would not work; a fact evidently owing to the stupidity of the gardener. On reconsidering the subject, he announced, to the disappointment of some amongst us, that, although the physical discovery was now complete, he saw a moral difficulty. It was not a *humming*-top that was required, but a *peg*-top. Now, this, in order to keep up the *vertigo* at full stretch, without which, to a certainty, gravitation would prove too much for him, needed to be whipped incessantly. But that was precisely what a gentleman ought not to tolerate; to be scourged unintermittingly on the legs by any grub of a gardener, unless it were Father Adam himself, was a thing he could not bring his mind to face. However, as some compensation, he proposed to improve the art of flying, which was, as everybody must acknowledge, in a condition disgraceful to civilised society. As he had made many a fire balloon, and had succeeded in some attempts at bringing down cats by *parachutes*, it was not very difficult to fly downwards from moderate elevations. But, as he was reproached by my sister for never flying back again, which, however, was a far different thing, and not even attempted by the philosopher in "Rasselas" (for

> "Revocare gradum, et *superas* evadere ad auras,
> Hic labor, hoc opus est"),

he refused, under such poor encouragement, to try his winged parachutes any more, either "aloft or alow," till he had thoroughly studied Bishop Wilkins[1] on the art of translating

[1] "*Bishop Wilkins*":—Dr. W., Bishop of Chester, in the reign of Charles II, notoriously wrote a book on the possibility of a voyage to the moon, which, in a bishop, would be called a translation to the moon, and perhaps it was *his* name in combination with *his* book that suggested the "Adventures of Peter Wilkins." It is unfair, however, to mention him in connection with that single one of his works which announces an extravagant purpose. He was really a scientific man,

right reverend gentlemen to the moon; and, in the meantime, he resumed his general lectures on physics. From these, however, he was speedily driven, or one might say shelled out, by a concerted assault of my sister Mary's. He had been in the habit of lowering the pitch of his lectures with ostentatious condescension to the presumed level of our poor understandings. This superciliousness annoyed my sister; and accordingly, with the help of two young female visitors, and my next younger brother—in subsequent times a little middy on board many a ship of H.M., and the most predestined rebel upon earth against all assumptions, small or great, of superiority [1]—she arranged a mutiny, that had the unexpected effect of suddenly extinguishing the lectures for ever. He had happened to say, what was no unusual thing with him, that he flattered himself he had made the point under discussion tolerably clear; "clear," he added, bowing round the half-circle of us, the audience, "to the meanest of capacities"; and then he repeated, sonorously, "clear to the most excruciatingly mean of capacities." Upon which a voice, a female voice—but whose voice, in the tumult that followed, I did not distinguish—retorted, "No, you haven't; it's as dark as sin"; and then, without a moment's interval, a second voice exclaimed, "Dark as night"; then came my younger brother's insurrectionary yell, "Dark as midnight"; then another female voice chimed in melodiously, "Dark as pitch"; and so the peal continued to come round like a catch, the whole being so well concerted, and the rolling fire so well sustained, that it was impossible to make head against it; whilst the abruptness of the interruption gave to it the protecting character of an oral "round-robin," it being impossible to challenge any one in particular as the ringleader. Burke's phrase of "the swinish multitude," applied to mobs, was then in everybody's mouth; and,

and already in the time of Cromwell (about 1656) had projected that Royal Society of London which was afterwards realised and presided over by Isaac Barrow and Isaac Newton. He was also a learned man, but still with a vein of romance about him, as may be seen in his most elaborate work—"The Essay towards a Philosophic or Universal Language."

[1] Richard Quincey, De Quincey's junior by a year or two, and known in the household as "Pink." See footnote, *ante*, p. 29.—M.

accordingly, after my brother had recovered from his first astonishment at this audacious mutiny, he made us several sweeping bows, that looked very much like tentative rehearsals of a sweeping *fusillade*, and then addressed us in a very brief speech, of which we could distinguish the words *pearls* and *swinish multitude*, but uttered in a very low key, perhaps out of some lurking consideration for the two young strangers. We all laughed in chorus at this parting salute ; my brother himself condescended at last to join us ; but there ended the course of lectures on natural philosophy.

As it was impossible, however, that he should remain quiet, he announced to us, that for the rest of his life he meant to dedicate himself to the intense cultivation of the tragic drama. He got to work instantly ; and very soon he had composed the first act of his "Sultan Selim" ; but, in defiance of the metre, he soon changed the title to "Sultan Amurath," considering *that* a much fiercer name, more bewhiskered and beturbaned. It was no part of his intention that we should sit lolling on chairs like ladies and gentlemen that had paid opera prices for private boxes. He expected every one of us, he said, to pull an oar. We were to *act* the tragedy. But, in fact, we had many oars to pull. There were so many characters, that each of us took four at the least, and the future middy had six. He, this wicked little middy,[1] caused the greatest affliction to Sultan Amurath, forcing him to order the amputation of his head six several times (that is, once in every one of his six parts) during the first act. In reality, the sultan, though otherwise a decent man, was too bloody. What by the bowstring, and what by the scimitar, he had so thinned the population with which he commenced business, that scarcely any of the characters remained alive at the end of act the first. Sultan Amurath found himself in an awkward situation. Large arrears of work remained, and hardly anybody to do it but the sultan

[1] "*Middy*" :—I call him so simply to avoid confusion, and by way of anticipation ; else he was too young at this time to serve in the navy. Afterwards he did so for many years, and saw every variety of service in every class of ships belonging to our navy. At one time, when yet a boy, he was captured by pirates, and compelled to sail with them ; and the end of his adventurous career was, that for many a year he has been lying at the bottom of the Atlantic.

himself. In composing act the second, the author had to proceed like Deucalion and Pyrrha, and to create an entirely new generation. Apparently this young generation, that ought to have been so good, took no warning by what had happened to their ancestors in act the first; one must conclude that they were quite as wicked, since the poor sultan had found himself reduced to order them all for execution in the course of this act the second. To the brazen age had succeeded an iron age; and the prospects were becoming sadder and sadder as the tragedy advanced. But here the author began to hesitate. He felt it hard to resist the instinct of carnage. And was it right to do so? Which of the felons whom he had cut off prematurely could pretend that a court of appeal would have reversed his sentence? But the consequences were distressing. A new set of characters in every act brought with it the necessity of a new plot; for people could not succeed to the arrears of old actions, or inherit ancient motives, like a landed estate. Five crops, in fact, must be taken off the ground in each separate tragedy, amounting, in short, to five tragedies involved in one.

Such, according to the rapid sketch which at this moment my memory furnishes, was the brother who now first laid open to me the gates of war. The occasion was this. He had resented, with a shower of stones, an affront offered to us by an individual boy, belonging to a cotton factory; for more than two years afterwards this became the *teterrima causa* of a skirmish or a battle as often as we passed the factory; and, unfortunately, *that* was twice a-day on every day, except Sunday. Our situation in respect to the enemy was as follows:—Greenhay, a country-house, newly built by my father, at that time was a clear mile from the outskirts of Manchester; but in after years, Manchester, throwing out the *tentacula* of its vast expansions, absolutely enveloped Greenhay; and, for anything I know, the grounds and gardens which then insulated the house may have long disappeared. Being a modest mansion, which (including hot walls, offices, and gardener's house) had cost only six thousand pounds, I do not know how it should have risen to the distinction of giving name to a region of that great town; however, it *has* done

so [1]; and at this time, therefore, after changes so great, it will be difficult for the *habitué* of that region to understand how my brother and myself could have a solitary road to traverse between Greenhay and Princess Street, then the termination, on that side, of Manchester. But so it was. Oxford *Street*, like its namesake in London, was then called the Oxford *Road;* and during the currency of our acquaintance with it, arose the first three houses in its neighbourhood; of which the third was built for the Rev. S. H., one of our guardians, for whom his friends had also built the church of St. Peter's—not a bowshot from the house. At present, however, he resided in Salford, nearly two miles from Greenhay; and to him we went over daily, for the benefit of his classical instructions. One sole cotton factory had then risen along the line of Oxford Street; and this was close to a bridge, which also was a new creation; for previously all passengers to Manchester went round by Garrat. This factory became to us the *officina gentium*, from which swarmed forth those Goths and Vandals that continually threatened our steps; and this bridge became the eternal arena of combat, we taking good care to be on the right side of the bridge for retreat—*i.e.*, on the town side, or the country side, accordingly as we were going out in the morning, or returning in the afternoon. Stones were the implements of warfare; and by continual practice both parties became expert in throwing them.

The origin of the feud it is scarcely requisite to rehearse, since the particular accident which began it was not the true efficient cause of our long warfare, but simply the casual occasion. The cause lay in our aristocratic dress. As children of an opulent family, where all provisions were liberal, and all appointments elegant, we were uniformly well-dressed; and, in particular, we wore trousers (at that time unheard of, except among sailors), and we also wore Hessian boots—a crime that could not be forgiven in the Lancashire of that day, because it expressed the double offence of being aristocratic and being outlandish. We were

[1] "Green*heys*," with a slight variation in the spelling, is the name given to that district, of which Greenhay formed the original nucleus. Probably, it was the solitary situation of the house which (failing any other grounds of denomination) raised it to this privilege.

aristocrats, and it was vain to deny it; could we deny our boots? whilst our antagonists, if not absolutely *sansculottes*, were slovenly and forlorn in their dress, often unwashed, with hair totally neglected, and always covered with flakes of cotton. Jacobins they were not, as regarded any sympathy with the Jacobinism that then desolated France; for, on the contrary, they detested everything French, and answered with brotherly signals to the cry of "Church and King," or "King and Constitution." But, for all that, as they were perfectly independent, getting very high wages, and these wages in a mode of industry that was then taking vast strides ahead, they contrived to reconcile this patriotic anti-Jacobinism with a personal Jacobinism of that sort which is native to the heart of man, who is by natural impulse (and not without a root of nobility, though also of base envy) impatient of inequality, and submits to it only through a sense of its necessity, or under a long experience of its benefits.

It was on an early day of our new *tyrocinium*, or perhaps on the very first, that, as we passed the bridge, a boy happening to issue from the factory[1] sang out to us, derisively, "Holloa, Bucks!" In this the reader may fail to perceive any atrocious insult commensurate to the long war which followed. But the reader is wrong. The word "*dandies*,"[2] which was what the villain meant, had not then been born, so that he could not have called us by that name, unless through the spirit of prophecy. *Buck* was the nearest word at hand in his Manchester vocabulary; he gave all he could, and let us dream the rest. But in the next moment he discovered our boots, and he consummated his crime by saluting us as "Boots! boots!" My brother made a dead stop, surveyed him with intense disdain, and bade him draw near, that he might "give his flesh to the fowls of the air." The boy declined to accept this liberal invitation, and conveyed his answer by a most contemptuous and plebeian

[1] "*Factory*":—Such was the designation technically at that time. At present, I believe that a building of that class would be called a "mill."

[2] This word, however, exists in *Jack-a-dandy*—a very old English word. But what does *that* mean?

gesture,[1] upon which my brother drove him in with a shower of stones.

During this inaugural flourish of hostilities, I, for my part, remained inactive, and therefore apparently neutral. But this was the last time that I did so: for the moment, indeed, I was taken by surprise. To be called a *buck* by one that had it in his choice to have called me a coward, a thief, or a murderer, struck me as a most pardonable offence; and as to *boots*, that rested upon a flagrant fact that could not be denied; so that at first I was green enough to regard the boy as very considerate and indulgent. But my brother soon rectified my views; or, if any doubts remained, he impressed me, at least, with a sense of my paramount duty to himself, which was threefold. First, it seems that I owed military allegiance to *him*, as my commander-in-chief, whenever we "took the field"; secondly, by the law of nations, I, being a cadet of my house, owed suit and service to him who was its head; and he assured me, that twice in a year, on *my* birth-day and on *his*, he had a right, strictly speaking, to make me lie down, and to set his foot upon my neck; lastly, by a law not so rigorous, but valid amongst gentlemen—viz., "by the *comity* of nations"—it seems I owed eternal deference to one so much older than myself, so much wiser, stronger, braver, more beautiful, and more swift of foot. Something like all this in tendency I had already believed, though I had not so minutely investigated the modes and grounds of my duty. By temperament, and through natural dedication to despondency, I felt resting upon me always too deep and gloomy a sense of obscure duties attached to life, that I never *should* be able to fulfil; a burden which I could not carry, and which yet I did not know how to throw off. Glad, therefore, I was to find the whole tremendous weight of obligations—the law and the prophets—all crowded into this one pocket command, "Thou shalt obey thy brother as God's vicar upon earth." For now, if by any future stone

[1] Precisely, however, the same gesture, plebeian as it was, by which the English commandant at Heligoland replied to the Danes when civilly inviting him to surrender. Southey it was, on the authority of Lieutenant Southey, his brother, who communicated to me this anecdote.

levelled at him who had called me a "buck," I should chance to draw blood—perhaps I might not have committed so serious a trespass on any rights which he could plead: but if I *had* (for on this subject my convictions were still cloudy), at any rate the duty I might have violated in regard to this general brother, in right of Adam, was cancelled when it came into collision with my paramount duty to this liege brother of my own individual house.

From this day, therefore, I obeyed all my brother's military commands with the utmost docility; and happy it made me that every sort of doubt, or question, or opening for demur, was swallowed up in the unity of this one papal principle, discovered by my brother—viz., that all rights and duties of casuistry were transferred from me to himself. *His* was the judgment—*his* was the responsibility; and to me belonged only the sublime obligation of unconditional faith in *him*. That faith I realised. It is true that he taxed me at times, in his reports of particular fights, with "horrible cowardice," and even with a "cowardice that seemed inexplicable, except on the supposition of treachery." But this was only a *façon de parler* with him: the idea of secret perfidy, that was constantly moving under-ground, gave an interest to the progress of the war, which else tended to the monotonous. It was a dramatic artifice for sustaining the interest, where the incidents might happen to be too slightly diversified. But that he did not believe his own charges was clear, because he never repeated them in his "General History of the Campaigns," which was a *resumé*, or recapitulating digest, of his daily reports.

We fought every day; and, generally speaking, *twice* every day; and the result was pretty uniform—viz., that my brother and I terminated the battle by insisting upon our undoubted right to run away. *Magna Charta*, I should fancy, secures that great right to every man; else, surely, it is sadly defective. But out of this catastrophe to most of our skirmishes, and to all our pitched battles except one, grew a standing schism between my brother and myself. My unlimited obedience had respect to action, but not to opinion. Loyalty to my brother did not rest upon hypocrisy; because I was faithful, it did not follow that I must be false in relation to his capricious opinions. And these

opinions sometimes took the shape of acts. Twice, at the least, in every week, but sometimes every night, my brother insisted on singing "Te Deum" for supposed victories he had won; and he insisted also on my bearing a part in these "Te Deums." Now, as I knew of no such victories, but resolutely asserted the truth—viz., that we ran away—a slight jar was thus given to the else triumphal effect of these musical ovations. Once having uttered my protest, however, willingly I gave my aid to the chanting; for I loved unspeakably the grand and varied system of chanting in the Romish and English Churches. And, looking back at this day to the ineffable benefits which I derived from the church of my childhood, I account among the very greatest those which reached me through the various chants connected with the "O, Jubilate," the "Magnificat," the "Te Deum," the "Benedicite," etc. Through these chants it was that the sorrow which laid waste my infancy, and the devotion which nature had made a necessity of my being, were profoundly interfused: the sorrow gave reality and depth to the devotion; the devotion gave grandeur and idealisation to the sorrow. Neither was my love for chanting altogether without knowledge. A son of my reverend guardian, much older than myself, who possessed a singular faculty of producing a sort of organ accompaniment with one-half of his mouth, whilst he sang with the other half, had given me some instructions in the art of chanting: and, as to my brother, he, the hundred-handed Briareus, could do all things; of course, therefore, he could chant.

Once having begun, it followed naturally that the war should deepen in bitterness. Wounds that wrote memorials in the flesh, insults that rankled in the heart—these were not features of the case likely to be forgotten by our enemies, and far less by my fiery brother. I, for my part, entered not into any of the passions that war may be supposed to kindle, except only the chronic passion of anxiety. *Fear* it was not; for experience had taught me that, under the random firing of our undisciplined enemies, the chances were not many of being wounded. But the uncertainties of the war; the doubts in every separate action whether I could keep up the requisite connection with my brother; and, in case I could not, the utter darkness that surrounded my fate;

whether, as a trophy won from Israel, I should be dedicated to the service of some Manchester Dagon, or pass through fire to Moloch; all these contingencies, for me that had no friend to consult, ran too violently into the master-current of my constitutional despondency, ever to give way under any casual elation of success. Success, however, we really had at times; in slight skirmishes pretty often; and once, at least, as the reader will find to his mortification, if he is wicked enough to take the side of the Philistines, a most smashing victory in a pitched battle. But even then, and whilst the hurrahs were yet ascending from our jubilating lips, the freezing remembrance came back to my heart of that deadly depression which, duly at the coming round of the morning and evening watches, travelled with me like my shadow on our approach to the memorable bridge. A bridge of sighs[1] too surely it was for me; and even for my brother

[1] "*Bridge of Sighs*":—Two men of memorable genius, Hood last, and Lord Byron by many years previously, have so appropriated this phrase, and re-issued it as English currency, that many readers suppose it to be theirs. But the genealogies of fine expressions should be more carefully preserved. The expression belongs originally to Venice. This *jus postliminii* becomes of real importance in many cases, but especially in the case of Shakspere. Could one have believed it possible beforehand? And yet it is a fact that he is made to seem a robber of the lowest order, by mere dint of suffering robbery. Purely through their own jewelly splendour have many hundreds of his phrases forced themselves into usage so general, under the vulgar infirmity of seeking to strengthen weak prose by shreds of poetic quotation, that at length the majority of careless readers come to look upon these phrases as belonging to the language, and traceable to no distinct proprietor any more than proverbs: and thus, on afterwards observing them in Shakspere, they regard him in the light of one accepting alms (like so many meaner persons) from the common treasury of the universal mind, on which treasury, meantime, he had himself conferred these phrases as original donations of his own. Many expressions in the "Paradise Lost," in "Il Penseroso," and in "L'Allegro," are in the same predicament. And thus the almost incredible case is realised which I have described—viz., that simply by having suffered a robbery through two centuries (for the first attempt at plundering Milton was made upon his juvenile poems), have Shakspere and Milton come to be taxed as robbers. N.B.—In speaking of Hood as having appropriated the phrase *Bridge of Sighs*, I would not be understood to represent him as by possibility aiming at any concealment. He was far above such a meanness by his nobility of heart, as he was raised above all need for it by the overflowing opulence of his genius.

it formed an object of fierce yet anxious jealousy, that he could not always disguise, as we first came in sight of it: for, if it happened to be occupied in strength, there was an end of all hope that we could attempt the passage; and *that* was a fortunate solution of the difficulty, as it imposed no evil beyond a circuit; which, at least, was safe, if the world should choose to call it inglorious. Even this shade of ignominy, however, my brother contrived to colour favourably, by calling us—that is, me and himself—"a corps of observation"; and he condescendingly explained to me, that, although making "a lateral movement," he had his eye upon the enemy, and "might yet come round upon his left flank in a way that wouldn't, perhaps, prove very agreeable." This, from the nature of the ground, never happened. We crossed the river at Garrat, out of sight from the enemy's position; and, on our return in the evening, when we reached that point of our route from which the retreat was secure to Greenhay, we took such revenge for the morning insult as might belong to extra liberality in our stone donations. On this line of policy there was, therefore, no cause for anxiety; but the common case was, that the numbers might not be such as to justify this caution, and yet quite enough for mischief. To my brother, however, stung and carried headlong into hostility by the martial instincts of his nature, the uneasiness of doubt or insecurity was swallowed up by his joy in the anticipation of victory, or even of contest; whilst to myself, whose exultation was purely official and ceremonial, as due by loyalty from a cadet to the head of his house, no such compensation existed. The enemy was no enemy in *my* eyes; his affronts were but retaliations; and his insults were so inapplicable to my unworthy self, being of a calibre exclusively meant for the use of my brother, that from me they recoiled, one and all, as cannon-shot from cotton bags.

The ordinary course of our day's warfare was this: between nine and ten in the morning occurred our first transit, and consequently our earliest opportunity for doing business. But at this time the great sublunary interest of breakfast, which swallowed up all nobler considerations of glory and ambition, occupied the work-people of the factory (or what in

the pedantic diction of this day are termed the "operatives"), so that very seldom any serious business was transacted. Without any formal armistice, the paramount convenience of such an arrangement silently secured its own recognition. Notice there needed none of truce, when the one side yearned for breakfast, and the other for a respite; the groups, therefore, on or about the bridge, if any at all, were loose in their array, and careless. We passed through them rapidly, and, on my part, uneasily; exchanging a few snarls, perhaps, but seldom or ever snapping at each other. The tameness was almost shocking of those who, in the afternoon, would inevitably resume their natural characters of tiger-cats and wolves. Sometimes, however, my brother felt it to be a duty that we should fight in the morning; particularly when any expression of public joy for a victory —bells ringing in the distance—or when a royal birth-day, or some traditional commemoration of ancient feuds (such as the 5th of November), irritated his martial propensities. Some of these, being religious festivals, seemed to require of us an *extra* homage, for which we knew not how to find any natural or significant expression, except through sharp discharges of stones, that being a language older than Hebrew or Sanscrit, and universally intelligible. But, excepting these high days of religious solemnity, when a man is called upon to show that he is not a Pagan or a miscreant in the eldest of senses, by thumping, or trying to thump, somebody who is accused or accusable of being heterodox, the great ceremony of breakfast was allowed to sanctify the hour. Some natural growls we uttered, but hushed them soon, regardless

> "Of the sweeping whirlpool's sway,
> That, hush'd in grim repose, look'd for his evening prey."

That came but too surely. Yes, evening never forgot to come; this odious necessity of fighting never missed its road back, or fell asleep, or loitered by the way, more than a bill of exchange, or a tertian fever. Five times a-week (Saturday sometimes, and Sunday always, were days of rest) the same scene rehearsed itself in pretty nearly the same succession of circumstances. Between four and five o'clock we had crossed

the bridge to the safe, or Greenhay, side; then we paused, and waited for the enemy. Sooner or later a bell rang, and from the smoky hive issued the hornets that night and day stung incurably my peace of mind. The order and procession of the incidents after this were odiously monotonous. My brother occupied the main high-road, precisely at the point where a very gentle rise of the ground attained its summit; for the bridge lay in a slight valley; and the main military position was fifty or eighty yards above the bridge; then—but having first examined my pockets, in order to be sure that my stock of ammunition—stones, fragments of slate, with a reasonable proportion of brickbats—was all correct and ready for action—he detached me about forty yards to the right, my orders being invariable, and liable to no doubts or "quibbling." Detestable in *my* ears was that word "*quibbling*," by which, for a thousand years, if the war had happened to last so long, he would have fastened upon me the imputation of meaning, or wishing, at least, to do what he called "pettifogulising"—that is, to plead some distinction, or verbal demur, in bar of my orders, under some colourable pretence that, according to their literal construction, they really did not admit of being fulfilled, or perhaps that they admitted it too much as being capable of fulfilment in two senses, either of them a practical sense. True it was that my eye was preternaturally keen for flaws of language, not from pedantic exaction of superfluous accuracy, but, on the contrary, from too conscientious a wish to escape the mistakes which language not rigorous is apt to occasion. So far from seeking to "pettifogulise"—*i.e.*, to find evasions for any purpose in a trickster's minute tortuosities of construction—exactly in the opposite direction, from mere excess of sincerity, most unwillingly I found, in almost everybody's words, an unintentional opening left for double interpretations. Undesigned equivocation prevails everywhere [1]; and it

[1] Geometry (it has been said) would not evade disputation, if a man could find his interest in disputing it: such is the spirit of cavil. But I, upon a very opposite ground, assert that there is not one page of prose that could be selected from the best writer in the English language (far less in the German), which, upon a sufficient interest arising, would not furnish matter, simply through its defects in pre-

is not the cavilling hair-splitter, but, on the contrary, the single-eyed servant of truth, that is most likely to insist upon the limitation of expressions too wide or too vague, and upon the decisive election between meanings potentially double. Not in order to resist or evade my brother's directions, but for the very opposite purpose—viz., that I might fulfil them to the letter—thus and no otherwise it happened that I showed so much scrupulosity about the exact value and position of his words, as finally to draw upon myself the vexatious reproach of being habitually a "pettifoguliser."

Meantime, our campaigning continued to rage. Overtures of pacification were never mentioned on either side. And I, for *my* part, with the passions only of peace at my heart, did the works of war faithfully, and with distinction. I presume so, at least, from the results. It is true I was continually falling into treason, without exactly knowing how I got into it, or how I got out of it. My brother also, it is true, sometimes assured me that he could, according to the rigour of martial justice, have me hanged on the first tree we passed; to which my prosaic answer had been, that of trees there *were* none in Oxford Street—(which, in imitation of Von Troil's famous chapter on the snakes of Lapland, the reader may accept, if he pleases, as a complete course of lectures on the "dendrology" of Oxford Street)—but, notwithstanding such little stumblings in my career, I continued to ascend in the service; and I am sure it will gratify my friendly readers to hear, that, before my eighth birth-day, I was promoted to the rank of major-general. Over this sunshine, however, soon swept a train of clouds. Three times I was taken prisoner; and with different results. The first time I was carried to the rear, and not molested in any way. Finding myself thus ignominiously neglected, I watched my opportunity; and, by making a wide circuit, easily effected my escape. In the next case, a brief council was held over

cision, for a suit in Chancery. Chancery suits do not arise, it is true, because the doubtful expressions do not touch any interest of property; but what *does* arise is this—that something more valuable than a pecuniary interest is continually suffering—viz., the interests of truth.

me ; but I was not allowed to hear the deliberations ; the result only being communicated to me—which result consisted in a message not very complimentary to my brother, and a small present of kicks to myself. This present was paid down without any discount, by means of a general subscription amongst the party surrounding me—that party, luckily, not being very numerous ; besides which, I must, in honesty, acknowledge myself, generally speaking, indebted to their forbearance. They were not disposed to be too hard upon me. But, at the same time, they clearly did not think it right that I should escape altogether from tasting the calamities of war. And this translated the estimate of my guilt from the public jurisdiction to that of the individual, sometimes capricious and harsh, and carrying out the public award by means of legs that ranged through all gradations of weight and agility. One kick differed exceedingly from another kick in dynamic value ; and, in some cases, this difference was so distressingly conspicuous, as to imply special malice, unworthy, I conceive, of all generous soldiership.

On returning to our own frontiers, I had an opportunity of displaying my exemplary greenness. That message to my brother, with all its *virus* of insolence, I repeated as faithfully for the spirit, and as literally for the expressions, as my memory allowed me to do : and in that troublesome effort, simpleton that I was, fancied myself exhibiting a soldier's loyalty to his commanding officer. My brother thought otherwise : he was more angry with me than with the enemy. I ought, he said, to have refused all participation in such *sansculottes'* insolence ; to carry it, was to acknowledge it as fit to be carried. One grows wiser every day ; and on this particular day I made a resolution that, if again made prisoner, I would bring no more "jaw" (so my brother called it) from the Philistines. If these people *would* send "jaw," I settled that, henceforwards, it must go through the post-office.

In my former captures, there had been nothing special or worthy of commemoration in the circumstances. Neither was there in the third, excepting that, by accident, in the second stage of the case, I was delivered over to the custody of young women and girls ; whereas the ordinary course would have thrown me upou the vigilant attentions (relieved

from monotony by the experimental kicks) of boys. So far, the change was very much for the better. I had a feeling myself, on first being presented to my new young mistresses, of a distressing sort. Having always, up to the completion of my sixth year, been a privileged pet, and almost, I might say, ranking amongst the sanctities of the household, with all its female sections, whether young or old (an advantage which I owed originally to a long illness, an ague, stretching over two entire years of my infancy), naturally I had learned to appreciate the indulgent tenderness of women; and my heart thrilled with love and gratitude, as often as they took me up into their arms and kissed me. Here it would have been as everywhere else; but, unfortunately, my introduction to these young women was in the very worst of characters. I had been taken in arms—in arms against their own brothers, cousins, sweethearts, and on pretexts too frivolous to mention. If asked the question, it would be found that I should not myself deny the fact of being at war with their whole order. What was the meaning of *that?* What was it to which war pledged a man? It pledged him, in case of opportunity, to burn, ravage, and depopulate the houses and lands of the enemy; which enemy was these fair girls. The warrior stood committed to universal destruction. Neither sex nor age; neither the smiles of unoffending infancy nor the grey hairs of the venerable patriarch; neither the sanctity of the matron nor the loveliness of the youthful bride, would confer any privilege with the warrior, consequently not with me.

Many other hideous features in the military character will be found in books innumerable—levelled at those who make war, and therefore at myself. And it appears finally by these books—that, as one of my ordinary practices, I make a wilderness, and call it a pacification; that I hold it a duty to put people to the sword; which done, to plough up the foundations of their hearths and altars, and then to sow the ground with salt.

All this was passing through my brain, when suddenly one young woman snatched me up in her arms, and kissed me; from *her*, I was passed round to others of the party, who all in turn caressed me, with no allusion to that warlike

mission, against them and theirs, which only had procured me the honour of an introduction to themselves in the character of captive. The too palpable fact that I was not the person meant by nature to exterminate their families, or to make wildernesses and call them pacifications, had withdrawn from their minds the counter fact—that, whatever had been my performances, my intentions had been hostile, and that in such a character only I could have become their prisoner. Not only did these young people kiss me, but I (seeing no military reason against it) kissed *them*. Really, if young women will insist on kissing major-generals, they must expect that the generals will retaliate. One only of the crowd adverted to the character in which I came before them: to be a lawful prisoner, it struck her too logical mind that I must have been caught in some aggressive practices. "Think," she said, "of this little dog fighting, and fighting our Jack." "But," said another, in a propitiatory tone, "perhaps he'll not do so any more." I was touched by the kindness of her suggestion, and the sweet, merciful sound of that same "*Not do so any more*," which really was prompted, I fear, much more by that charity in her which hopeth all things, than by any signs of amendment in myself. Well was it for me that no time was allowed for investigation into my morals by point-blank questions as to my future intentions. In which case it would have appeared too undeniably, that the same sad necessity which had planted me hitherto in a position of hostility to their estimable families, would continue to persecute me; and that, on the very next day, duty to my brother, howsoever it might struggle with gratitude to themselves, would range me in martial attitude, with a pocketful of stones, meant, alas! for the exclusive use of their respectable kinsmen. Whilst I was preparing myself, however, for this painful exposition, my female friends observed issuing from the factory a crowd of boys not likely at all to improve my prospects. Instantly setting me down on my feet, they formed a sort of *cordon sanitaire* behind me, by stretching out their petticoats or aprons, as in dancing, so as to touch: and then, crying out, "Now, little dog, run for thy life," prepared themselves (I doubt not) for rescuing me, should my re-capture be effected.

But this was *not* effected, although attempted with an energy that alarmed me, and even perplexed me with a vague thought (far too ambitious for my years) that one or two of the pursuing party might be possessed by some demon of jealousy, as eyewitnesses to my revelling amongst the lips of that fair girlish bevy, kissing and being kissed, loving and being loved; in which case, from all that ever I had read about jealousy (and I had read a great deal—viz., "Othello," and Collins's "Ode to the Passions"), I was satisfied that, if again captured, I had very little chance for my life. That jealousy was a green-eyed monster, nobody could know better than *I* did. "Oh, my lord, beware of jealousy!" Yes; and my lord couldn't possibly have more reason for bewaring of it than myself; indeed, well it would have been had his lordship run away from all the ministers of jealousy—Iago, Cassio, and embroidered handkerchiefs—at the same pace of six miles an hour which kept me ahead of my infuriated pursuers. Ah, that maniac, white as a leper with flakes of cotton, can I ever forget him, *him* that ran so far in advance of his party? What passion, but jealousy, could have sustained him in so hot a chase? There were some lovely girls in the fair company that had so condescendingly caressed me; but, doubtless, upon that sweet creature his love must have settled, who suggested, in her soft, relenting voice, a penitence in me that, alas! had not dawned, saying, "*Yes; but perhaps he will not do so any more.*" Thinking, as I ran, of her beauty, I felt that this jealous demoniac must fancy himself justified in committing seven times seven murders upon me, if he should have it in his power. But, thank heaven, if jealousy can run six miles an hour, there are other passions, as for instance panic, that can run, upon occasion, six and a-half; so, as I had the start of him (you know, reader), and not a very short start—thanks be to the expanded petticoats of my dear female friends!—naturally it happened that the green-eyed monster came in second best. Time luckily was precious with *him;* and, accordingly, when he had chased me into the by-road leading down to Greenhay, he turned back. For the moment, therefore, I found myself suddenly released from danger. But this counted for nothing. The same scene

would probably revolve upon me continually ; and, on the next rehearsal, Green-eyes might have better luck. It saddened me, besides, to find myself under the political necessity of numbering amongst the Philistines, and as daughters of Gath, so many kind-hearted girls, whom, by personal proof, I knew to be such. In the profoundest sense I was unhappy ; and not from any momentary accident of distress, but from deep glimpses which now, and heretofore, had opened themselves, as occasions arose, into the inevitable conflicts of life. One of the saddest among such conflicts is the necessity, wheresoever it occurs, of adopting—though the heart should disown—the enmities of one's own family, or country, or religious sect. In forms how afflicting must that necessity have sometimes occurred during the Parliamentary War ! And, in after years, amongst our beautiful old English metrical romances, I found the same impassioned complaint uttered by a knight, Sir Ywain, as early as A.D. 1240—

> " But now, where'er I stray or go,
> My heart She has that is my foe ! "

I knew—I anticipated to a certainty—that my brother would not hear of any merit belonging to the factory population whom every day we had to meet in battle ; on the contrary, even submission on *their* part, and willingness to walk penitentially through the *Furcæ Caudinæ*, would hardly have satisfied his sense of their criminality. Often, indeed, as we came in view of the factory, he would shake his fist at it, and say, in a ferocious tone of voice, " *Delenda est Carthago !* " And certainly, I thought to myself, it must be admitted by everybody, that the factory people are inexcusable in raising a rebellion against my brother. But still rebels were men, and sometimes were women ; and rebels that stretch out their petticoats like fans for the sake of screening one from the hot pursuit of enemies with fiery eyes (green or otherwise) really are not the sort of people that one wishes to hate.

Homewards, therefore, I drew in sadness, and little doubting that *hereafter* I might have verbal feuds with my brother on behalf of my fair friends, but not dreaming how

much displeasure I had already incurred by my treasonable collusion with their caresses. That part of the affair he had seen with his own eyes, from his position on the field; and then it was that he left me indignantly to my fate, which, by my first reception, it was easy to see would not prove very gloomy. When I came into our own study, I found him engaged in preparing a *bulletin* (which word was just then travelling into universal use), reporting briefly the events of the day. The art of drawing, as I shall again have occasion to mention, was amongst his foremost accomplishments; and round the margin of the bulletin ran a black border, ornamented with cypress, and other funereal emblems. When finished, it was carried into the room of Mrs. Evans. This Mrs. Evans was an important person in our affairs. My mother, who never chose to have any direct communication with her servants, always had a housekeeper for the regulation of all domestic business; and the housekeeper for some years was this Mrs. Evans. Into her private parlour, where she sat aloof from the under servants, my brother and I had the *entrée* at all times, but upon very different terms of acceptance: he as a favourite of the first class; *I*, by sufferance, as a sort of gloomy shadow that ran after *his* person, and could not well be shut out if *he* were let in. Him she admired in the very highest degree; myself, on the contrary, she detested,—which made me unhappy. But then, in some measure, she made amends for this, by despising me in extremity; and for *that* I was truly thankful—I need not say *why*, as the reader already knows. Why she detested me, so far as I know, arose in part out of my thoughtfulness indisposed to garrulity, and in part out of my savage, Orson-like sincerity. I had a great deal to say, but then I could say it only to a very few people, amongst whom Mrs. Evans was certainly not one; and when I *did* say anything, I fear that dire ignorance prevented my laying the proper restraints upon my too liberal candour; and *that* could not prove acceptable to one who thought nothing of working for any purpose, or for no purpose, by petty tricks, or even falsehoods—all which I held in stern abhorrence, that I was at no pains to conceal. The *bulletin* on this occasion, garnished with its pageantry of woe,

cypress wreaths, and arms reversed, was read aloud to Mrs. Evans, indirectly therefore to me. It communicated, with Spartan brevity, the sad intelligence (but not sad to Mrs. E.), "that the major-general had for ever disgraced himself, by submitting to the caresses of the enemy." I leave a blank for the epithet affixed to "caresses," not because there *was* any blank, but, on the contrary, because my brother's wrath had boiled over in such a hubble-bubble of epithets, some only half erased, some doubtfully erased, that it was impossible, out of the various readings, to pick out the true classical text. "Infamous," "disgusting," and "odious," struggled for precedency ; and *infamous* they might be ; but on the other affixes I held my own private opinions. For some days, my brother's displeasure continued to roll in reverberating thunders ; but at length it growled itself to rest ; and at last he descended to mild expostulations with me, showing clearly, in a series of general orders, what frightful consequences must ensue, if major-generals (as a general principle) should allow themselves to be kissed by the enemy.

About this time, my brother began to issue, instead of occasional bulletins, through which hitherto he had breathed his opinions into the ear of the public (viz., of Mrs. Evans), a regular gazette, which, in imitation of the "London Gazette," was published twice a-week. I suppose that no creature ever led such a life as *I* did in that gazette. Run up to the giddiest heights of promotion on one day, for merits which I could not myself discern, in a week or two I was brought to a court-martial for offences equally obscure. I was cashiered ; I was restored "on the intercession of a distinguished lady" (Mrs. Evans, to wit) ; I was threatened with being drummed out of the army, to the music of the "Rogue's March" ; and then, in the midst of all this misery and degradation, upon the discovery of some supposed energy that I had manifested, I was decorated with the Order of the Bath. My reading had been extensive enough to give me some vague aerial sense of the honour involved in such a decoration, whilst I was profoundly ignorant of the channels through which it could reach an individual, and of the sole fountain from which it could flow. But, in this enormity of

disproportion between the cause and the effect, between the agency and the result, I saw nothing more astonishing than I had seen in many other cases confessedly true. Thousands of vast effects, by all that I had heard, linked themselves to causes apparently trivial. The dreadful taint of scrofula, according to the belief of all Christendom, fled at the simple touch of a Stuart sovereign[1]: no miracle in the Bible, from Jordan or from Bethesda, could be more sudden, or more astoundingly victorious. By my own experience, again, I knew that a *styan* (as it is called) upon the eyelid could be easily reduced, though not instantaneously, by the slight application of any golden trinket. Warts upon the fingers of children I had myself known to vanish under the *verbal* charm of a gipsy woman, without any medicinal application whatever. And I well knew, that almost all nations believed in the dreadful mystery of the *evil eye;* some requiring, as a condition of the evil agency, the co-presence of malice in the agent; but others, as appeared from my father's Portuguese recollections, ascribing the same horrid power to the eye of certain select persons, even though innocent of all malignant purpose, and absolutely unconscious of their own fatal gift, until awakened to it by the results. Why, therefore, should there be anything to shock, or even to surprise, in the power claimed by my brother, as an attribute inalienable from primogeniture in certain select families, of conferring knightly honours? The red riband of the Bath he certainly *did* confer upon me; and once, in a paroxysm of imprudent liberality, he promised me at the end of certain months, supposing that I swerved from my duty by no atrocious delinquency, the Garter itself. This, I knew, was a far loftier distinction than the Bath. Even then it was so; and since those days

[1] "*Of a Stuart sovereign*": and by no means of a Stuart only. Queen Anne, the last Stuart who sat on the British throne, was the last of *our* princes who touched for the *king's evil* (as scrofula was generally called until lately); but the Bourbon Houses, on the thrones of France, Spain, and Naples, as well as the House of Savoy, claimed and exercised the same supernatural privilege down to a much later period than the year 1714—the last of Queen Anne: according to their own and the popular faith, they could have cleansed Naaman the Syrian, and Gehazi too.

it has become much more so ; because the long roll of martial services in the great war with Napoleon compelled our government greatly to widen the basis of the Bath. This promise was never fulfilled ; but not for any want of clamorous persecution on my part addressed to my brother's wearied ear, and somewhat callous sense of honour. Every fortnight or so, I took care that he should receive a "refresher," as lawyers call it—a new and revised brief—memorialising my pretensions. These it was my brother's policy to parry, by alleged instances of recent misconduct on my part. But all such offences, I insisted, were thoroughly washed away by subsequent services in moments of peril, such as he himself could not always deny. In reality, I believe his real motive for withholding the Garter was, that he had nothing better to bestow upon himself.

"Now, look here," he would say, appealing to Mrs. Evans; "I suppose there's a matter of half-a-dozen kings on the Continent that would consent to lose three of their fingers, if by such a sacrifice they could purchase the blue riband ; and here is this little scamp, conceiting himself entitled to it before he has finished two campaigns." But I was not the person to be beaten off in this fashion. I took my stand upon the promise. A promise *was* a promise, even if made to a scamp ; and then, besides——but there I hesitated ; awful thoughts interposed to check me ; else I wished to suggest that, perhaps, some two or three among that half-dozen kings might also be scamps. However, I reduced the case to this plain dilemma : These six kings had received a promise, or they had not. If they had not, my case was better than theirs ; if they *had*, then, said I, "all seven of us "——I was going to add, "are sailing in the same boat," or something to that effect, though not so picturesquely expressed ; but I was interrupted by his deadly frown at my audacity in thus linking myself on as a seventh to this *attelage* of kings ; and that such an absolute grub should dream of ranking as one in a bright pleiad of pretenders to the Garter. I had not particularly thought of that ; but, now that such a demur was offered to my consideration, I thought of reminding him that, in a certain shadowy sense, I also might presume to class myself as a king,—the meaning

of which was this: Both my brother and myself, for the sake of varying our intellectual amusements, occupied ourselves at times in governing imaginary kingdoms. I do not mention this as anything unusual; it is a common resource of mental activity and of aspiring energies amongst boys. Hartley Coleridge, for example, had a kingdom which he governed for many years; whether well or ill, is more than I can say. Kindly, I am sure, he would govern it; but, unless a machine had been invented for enabling him to write without effort (as was really done for our Fourth George during the pressure of illness), I fear that the public service must have languished deplorably for want of the royal signature. In sailing past his own dominions, what dolorous outcries would have saluted him from the shore—"Holloa, royal sir! here's the deuce to pay: a perfect lock there is, as tight as locked jaw, upon the course of our public business; throats there are to be cut, from the product of ten jail-deliveries, and nobody dares to cut them, for want of the proper warrant; archbishoprics there are to be filled, and, because they are *not* filled, the whole nation is running helter-skelter into heresy;—and all in consequence of your majesty's sacred laziness." *Our* governments were less remissly administered; since each of us, by continued reports of improvements and gracious concessions to the folly or the weakness of our subjects, stimulated the zeal of his rival. And here, at least, there seemed to be no reason why I should come into collision with my brother. At any rate, I took pains *not* to do so. But all was in vain. My destiny was, to live in one eternal element of feud.

My own kingdom was an island called Gombroon. But in what parallel of north or south latitude it lay, I concealed for a time as rigorously as ancient Rome through every century concealed her real name.[1] The object in this pro-

[1] One reason, I believe, why it was held a point of wisdom, in ancient days, that the metropolis of a warlike state should have a secret name hidden from the world, lay in the Pagan practice of *evocation*, applied to the tutelary deities of such a state. These deities might be lured by certain rites and briberies into a transfer of their favours to the besieging army. But, in order to make such an evocation effectual, it was necessary to know the original and secret name of the beleaguered city: and this, therefore, was religiously concealed.

visional concealment was, to regulate the position of my own territory by that of my brother's ; for I was determined to place a monstrous world of waters between us, as the only chance (and a very poor one it proved) for compelling my brother to keep the peace. At length, for some reason unknown to me, and much to my astonishment, he located his capital city in the high latitude of 65 deg. north. That fact being once published and settled, instantly I smacked my little kingdom of Gombroon down into the tropics, 10 deg., I think, south of the line. Now, at least, I was on the right side of the hedge, or so I flattered myself ; for it struck me that my brother never would degrade himself by fitting out a costly nautical expedition against poor little Gombroon ; and how else could he get at me ? Surely the very fiend himself, if he happened to be in a high arctic latitude, would not indulge his malice so far as to follow its trail into the Tropic of Capricorn. And what was to be got by such a freak ? There was no Golden Fleece in Gombroon. If the fiend or my brother fancied *that*, for once they were in the wrong box ; and there was no variety of vegetable produce, for I never denied that the poor little island was only 270 miles in circuit. Think, then, of sailing through 75 deg. of latitude only to crack such a miserable little filbert as that. But my brother stunned me by explaining that, although his capital lay in lat. 65 deg. N., not the less his dominions swept southwards through a matter of 80 or 90 deg. ; and, as to the Tropic of Capricorn, much of it was his own private property. I was aghast at hearing *that*. It seemed that vast horns and promontories ran down from all parts of his dominions towards any country whatsoever, in either hemisphere — empire, or republic ; monarchy, polyarchy, or anarchy—that he might have reasons for assaulting.

Here in one moment vanished all that I had relied on for protection : distance I had relied on, and suddenly I was found in close neighbourhood to my most formidable enemy. Poverty I had relied on, and *that* was not denied ; he granted the poverty, but it was dependent on the barbarism of the Gombroonians. It seems that in the central forests of Gombroonia there were diamond mines, which my people,

from their low condition of civilisation, did not value, nor had any means of working. Farewell, therefore, on *my* side, to all hopes of enduring peace, for here was established, in legal phrase, *a lien* for ever upon my island, and not upon its margin, but its very centre, in favour of any invaders, better able than the natives to make its treasures available. For, of old, it was an article in my brother's code of morals — that, supposing a contest between any two parties, of which one possessed an article, whilst the other was better able to use it, the rightful property vested in the latter. As if you met a man with a musket, then you might justly challenge him to a trial in the art of making gunpowder ; which if you *could* make, and he could *not*, in that case the musket was *de jure* yours. For what shadow of a right had the fellow to a noble instrument which he could not "maintain" in a serviceable condition, and "feed" with its daily rations of powder and shot ? Still, it may be fancied that, since all the relations between us as independent sovereigns (whether of war, or peace, or treaty) rested upon our own representations and official reports, it was surely within my competence to deny or qualify, as much as within his to assert. But, in reality, the *law* of the contest between us, as suggested by some instinct of propriety in my own mind, would not allow me to proceed in such a method. What he said was like a move at chess or draughts, which it was childish to dispute. The move being made, my business was—to face it, to parry it, to evade it, and, if I could, to overthrow it. I proceeded as a lawyer who moves as long as he can, not by blank denial of facts (or *coming to an issue*), but by *demurring* (*i.e.*, admitting the allegations of fact, or otherwise interpreting their construction). It was the understood necessity of the case, that I must passively accept my brother's statements so far as regarded their verbal expression ; and, if I would extricate my poor islanders from their troubles, it must be by some distinction or evasion lying *within* this expression, or not blankly contradicting it.

"How, and to what extent," my brother asked, "did I raise taxes upon my subjects ?" My first impulse was to say, that I did not tax them at all, for I had a perfect horror of doing so ; but prudence would not allow of my saying *that ;*

because it was too probable he would demand to know how, in that case, I maintained a standing army; and if I once allowed it to be supposed that I had none, there was an end for ever to the independence of my people. Poor things! they would have been invaded and dragooned in a month. I took some days, therefore, to consider that point, but at last replied, that my people, being maritime, supported themselves mainly by a herring fishery, from which I deducted a part of the produce, and afterwards sold it for manure to neighbouring nations. This last hint I borrowed from the conversation of a stranger who happened to dine one day at Greenhay, and mentioned that in Devonshire, or at least on the western coast of that country, near Ilfracombe, upon any excessive take of herrings, beyond what the markets could absorb, the surplus was applied to the land as a valuable dressing. It might be inferred from this account, however, that the arts must be in a languishing state, amongst a people that did not understand the process of salting fish; and my brother observed derisively, much to my grief, that a wretched ichthyophagous people must make shocking soldiers, weak as water, and liable to be knocked over like nine-pins; whereas, in *his* army, not a man ever ate herrings, pilchards, mackerels, or, in fact, condescended to anything worse than sirloins of beef.

At every step I had to contend for the honour and independence of my islanders; so that early I came to understand the weight of Shakspere's sentiment—

"Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown!"

Oh, reader, do not laugh! I lived for ever under the terror of two separate wars in two separate worlds: one against the factory boys, in a real world of flesh and blood, of stones and brickbats, of flight and pursuit, that were anything but figurative; the other in a world purely aerial, where all the combats and the sufferings were absolute moonshine. And yet the simple truth is—that, for anxiety and distress of mind, the reality (which almost every morning's light brought round) was as nothing in comparison of that dream-kingdom which rose like a vapour from my own brain, and which apparently by the *fiat* of my will could be for ever dissolved.

Ah ! but no ; I had contracted obligations to Gombroon ; I had submitted my conscience to a yoke ; and in secret truth my will had no such autocratic power. Long contemplation of a shadow, earnest study for the welfare of that shadow, sympathy with the wounded sensibilities of that shadow under accumulated wrongs, these bitter experiences, nursed by brooding thought, had gradually frozen that shadow into a rigour of reality far denser than the material realities of brass or granite. Who builds the most durable dwellings ? asks the labourer in "Hamlet" ; and the answer is, The gravedigger. He builds for corruption ; and yet *his* tenements are incorruptible : "the houses which *he* makes last to doomsday." [1] Who is it that seeks for concealment ? Let him hide himself [2] in the unsearchable chambers of light—

[1] "Hamlet," Act v. scene 1.

[2] "*Hide himself in—light*" :—The greatest scholar, by far, that this island ever produced (viz., Richard Bentley) published (as is well known) a 4to volume that in some respects is the very worst 4to now extant in the world—viz., a critical edition of the "Paradise Lost." I observe, in the "Edinburgh Review" (July, 1851, No. 191, p. 15), that a learned critic supposes Bentley to have meant this edition as a "practical jest." Not at all. Neither could the critic have fancied such a possibility, if he had taken the trouble (which *I* did many a year back) to examine it. A jest-book it certainly is, and the most prosperous of jest-books, but undoubtedly never meant for such by the author. A man whose lips are livid with anger does not jest, and does not understand jesting. Still, the Edinburgh Reviewer is right about the proper functions of the book, though wrong about the intentions of the author. The fact is, the man was maniacally in error, and always in error, as regarded the ultimate or poetic truth of Milton ; but, as regarded truth reputed and truth *apparent*, he often had the air of being furiously in the right ; an example of which I will cite. Milton, in the First Book of the "Paradise Lost," had said—

"That from the *secret* top
Of Oreb or of Sinai didst inspire ;"

upon which Bentley comments in effect thus : "How !—the exposed summit of a mountain *secret* ? Why, it's like Charing Cross—always the least secret place in the whole county." So one might fancy : since the summit of a mountain, like Plinlimmon or Cader Idris in Wales, like Skiddaw or Helvellyn in England, constitutes a central object of attention and gaze for the whole circumjacent district, measured by a radius sometimes of 15 to 20 miles. Upon this consideration, Bentley instructs us to substitute as the true reading—"That on the *sacred* top," &c. Meantime, an actual experiment will

of light which at noonday, more effectually than any gloom, conceals the very brightest stars, rather than in labyrinths of darkness the thickest. What criminal is that who wishes to abscond from public justice? Let him hurry into the frantic publicities of London, and by no means into the quiet privacies of the country. So, and upon the analogy of these cases, we may understand that, to make a strife overwhelming by a thousandfold to the feelings, it must not deal with gross material interests, but with such as rise into the world of dreams, and act upon the nerves through spiritual, and not through fleshly, torments. Mine, in the present case, rose suddenly, like a rocket, into their meridian altitude, by means of a hint furnished to my brother from a Scottish advocate's reveries.

This advocate, who by his writings became the remote cause of so much affliction to my childhood, and struck a blow at the dignity of Gombroon that neither my brother nor all the forces of Tigrosylvania (my brother's kingdom) ever could have devised, was the celebrated James Burnett, better known to the English public by his judicial title of Lord Monboddo. The Burnetts of Monboddo, I have often heard, were a race distinguished for their intellectual accomplishments through several successive generations; and the judge in question was eminently so. It did him no injury that many people regarded him as crazy. In England, at the beginning of the last century, we had a saying,[1] in reference to the Harveys of Lord Bristol's family, equally distinguished for wit, beauty, and eccentricity, that at the creation there had been three kinds of people made—viz., men, women, and Harveys; and by all accounts something of the same kind might plausibly have

demonstrate that there is no place so absolutely secret and hidden as the exposed summit of a mountain, 3500 feet high, in respect to an eye stationed in the valley immediately below. A whole party of men, women, horses, and even tents, looked at under those circumstances, is absolutely invisible unless by the aid of glasses: and it becomes evident that a murder might be committed on the bare open summit of such a mountain with more assurance of absolute secrecy than anywhere else in the whole surrounding district.

[1] Which "*saying*" is sometimes ascribed, I know not how truly, to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

been said in Scotland about the Burnetts. Lord Monboddo's nieces, of whom one perished by falling from a precipice (and, as I have heard, through mere absence of mind, whilst musing upon a book which she carried in her hand), still survive in the affection of many friends, through the interest attached to their intellectual gifts; and Miss Burnett, the daughter of the judge, is remembered in all the memorials of Burns the poet, as the most beautiful, and otherwise the most interesting, of his female aristocratic friends in Edinburgh. Lord Monboddo himself trod an eccentric path in literature and philosophy; and our tutor, who spent his whole life in reading, withdrawing himself in that way from the anxieties incident to a narrow income and a large family, found, no doubt, a vast fund of interesting suggestions in Lord M.'s "Dissertations on the Origin of Language"; but to us he communicated only one section of the work. It was a long passage, containing some very useful illustrations of a Greek idiom; useful I call them, because four years afterwards, when I had made great advances in my knowledge of Greek, they so appeared to me.[1] But then, being scarcely seven years old, as soon as

[1] It strikes me, upon second thoughts, that the particular idiom which Lord Monboddo illustrated as regarded the Greek language merits a momentary notice; and for this reason—that it plays a part not at all less conspicuous or less delicate in the Latin. Here is an instance of its use in Greek, taken from the well-known Night-scene in the "Iliad":—

———γηθησε δε ποιμενος ητος,

"and the heart of the shepherd *rejoices*"; where the verb γηθησε is in the indefinite or aorist tense, and is meant to indicate a condition of feeling not limited to any time whatever—past, present, or future. In Latin the force and elegance of this usage are equally impressive, if not more so. At this moment I remember two cases of this in Horace—

1. "Rarò antecedentem scelestum
Deseruit pede pœna claudo";
2. "sæpe Diespiter
Neglectus incesto *addidit* integrum."

That is—"Oftentimes the Supreme Ruler, when treated with neglect, confounds or unites (not *has united*, as the tyro might fancy) the impure man with the upright in one common fate."

Exceedingly common is this usage in Latin poetry, when the object is to generalise a remark—as not connected with one mode of time

our tutor had finished his long extract from the Scottish judge's prelection, I could express my thankfulness for what I had received only by composing my features to a deeper solemnity and sadness than usual—no very easy task, I have been told ; otherwise, I really had not the remotest conception of what his lordship meant. I knew very well the thing called a *tense ;* I knew even then by name the *Aoristus Primus*, as a respectable tense in the Greek language. It (or shall we say *he?*) was known to the whole Christian world by this distinction of *Primus ;* clearly, therefore, there must be some low, vulgar tense in the background, pretending also to the name of Aorist, but universally scouted as the *Aoristus Secundus*, or Birmingham counterfeit. So that, unable as I was, from ignorance, to go along with Lord M.'s appreciation of his pretensions, still, had it been possible to meet an Aoristus Primus in the flesh, I should have bowed to him submissively, as to one apparently endowed with the mysterious rights of primogeniture. Not so my brother. Aorist, indeed ! Primus or Secundus, what mattered it ? Paving-stones were something, brickbats were something, but an old superannuated tense ! That any grown man should trouble himself about *that !* Indeed, there *was* something extraordinary there. For it is not amongst the ordinary functions of lawyers to take charge of Greek ; far less, one might suppose, of lawyers in Scotland, where the *general* system of education has moved for two centuries upon a principle of slight regard to classical literature. Latin literature was very much neglected, and Greek nearly altogether. The more was the astonishment at finding a rare delicacy of critical instinct, as well as of critical

more than another. In reality, all three modes of time—past, present, future—are used (though not equally used) in all languages for this purpose of generalisation. Thus,

1. The *future :* as, Sapiens dominabitur astris.
2. The *present :* as, Fortes fortuna juvat.
3. The *past :* as in the two cases cited from Horace.

But this practice holds equally in English : as to the future and the present, nobody will doubt it ; and here is a case from the past—"The fool *hath said* in his heart, There is no God" ; not meaning that in some past time he hath said so, but that generally in all times he *does* say so, and *will* say so.

sagacity, applied to the Greek idiomatic niceties by a Scottish lawyer—viz., that same eccentric judge, first made known to us by our tutor.

To the majority of readers, meantime, at this day, Lord M. is memorable chiefly for his craze about the degeneracy of us poor moderns, when compared with the men of Pagan antiquity ; which craze itself might possibly not have been generally known, except in connection with the little skirmish between him and Dr. Johnson, noticed in Boswell's account of the Doctor's Scottish tour. "Ah, doctor," said Lord M., upon some casual suggestion of that topic, "poor creatures are we of this eighteenth century ; our fathers were better men than we!" "Oh no, my lord," was Johnson's reply ; "we are quite as strong as our forefathers, and a great deal wiser!" Such a craze, however, is too widely diffused, and falls in with too obstinate a preconception[1]

[1] "*Too obstinate a preconception*" :—Until the birth of geology, and of fossil palæontology, concurring with vast strides ahead in the science of comparative anatomy, it is a well-established fact, that oftentimes the most scientific museum admitted as genuine fragments of the human osteology what in fact belonged to the gigantic brutes of our earth in her earliest stages of development. This mistake would go some way in accounting for the absurd disposition in all generations to view themselves as abridged editions of their forefathers. Added to which, as a separate cause of error, there can be little doubt, that intermingled with the human race there has at most periods of the world been a separate and Titanic race, such as the Anakim amongst the peoples of Palestine, the Cyclopean race diffused over the Mediterranean in the elder ages of Greece, and certain tribes amongst the Alps, known to Evelyn in his youth (about Cromwell's time) by an unpleasant travelling experience. These gigantic races, however, were no arguments for a degeneration amongst the rest of mankind. They were evidently a variety of man, co-existent with the ordinary races, but liable to be absorbed and gradually lost by intermarriage amongst other tribes of the ordinary standard. Occasional exhumations of such Titan skeletons would strengthen the common prejudice. They would be taken not for a local variety, but for an antediluvian or prehistoric type, from which the present races of man had arisen by gradual degeneration.

These cases of actual but misinterpreted experience, at the same time that they naturally must tend to fortify the popular prejudice, would also, by accounting for it, and engrafting it upon a reasonable origin, so far tend to take from it the reproach of a prejudice. Though erroneous, it would yet seem to us, in looking back upon it, a rational and even an inevitable opinion, having such plausible grounds to

in the human race, which has in every age hypochondriacally regarded itself as under some fatal necessity of dwindling, much to have challenged public attention. As real paradoxes (spite of the idle meaning attached usually to the word *paradox*) have often no falsehood in them, so here, on the contrary, was a falsehood which had in it nothing paradoxical. It contradicted all the indications of history and experience, which uniformly had pointed in the very opposite direction; and so far it ought to have been paradoxical (that is, revolting to popular opinion); but was *not* so; for it fell in with prevailing opinions, with the oldest, blindest, and most inveterate of human super-

stand upon; plausible, I mean, until science and accurate examination of the several cases had begun to read them into a different construction. Yet, on the other hand, in spite of any colourable excuses that may be pleaded for this prejudice, it is pretty plain that, after all, there is in human nature a deep-laid predisposition to an obstinate craze of this nature. Else why is it that, in every age alike, men have asserted or even assumed the downward tendency of the human race in all that regards *moral* qualities. For the *physical* degeneration of man there really were some apparent (though erroneous) arguments; but for the moral degeneration, no argument at all, small or great. Yet, a bigotry of belief in this idle notion has always prevailed amongst moralists, Pagan alike and Christian. Horace, for example, informs us that

> "Aetas parentum, pejor avis, tulit
> Nos nequiores—mox daturos
> Progeniem vitiosiorem."

The last generation was worse, it seems, than the penultimate, as the present is worse than the last. We, however, of the present, bad as we may be, shall be kept in countenance by the coming generation, which will prove much worse than ourselves. On the same precedent, all the sermons through the three last centuries, if traced back through decennial periods, so as to form thirty successive strata, will be found regularly claiming the precedency in wickedness for the immediate period of the writer. Upon which theories, as men ought physically to have dwindled long ago into pigmies, so, on the other hand, morally they must by this time have left Sodom and Gomorrah far behind. What a strange animal must man upon this scheme offer to our contemplation; shrinking in size, by graduated process, through every century, until at last he would not rise an inch from the ground; and, on the other hand, as regards villany, towering ever more and more up to the heavens. What a dwarf! what a giant! Why, the very crows would combine to destroy such a little monster.

stitions. If extravagant, yet to the multitude it did not *seem* extravagant. So natural a craze, therefore, however baseless, would never have carried Lord Monboddo's name into that meteoric notoriety and atmosphere of astonishment which soon invested it in England. And, in that case, my childhood would have escaped the deadliest blight of mortification and despondency that could have been incident to a most morbid temperament concurring with a situation of visionary (yes! if you please, of fantastic) but still of most real distress.

How much it would have astonished Lord Monboddo to find himself made answerable—virtually made answerable, by the evidence of secret tears—for the misery of an unknown child in Lancashire. Yet night and day these silent memorials of suffering were accusing him as the founder of a wound that could not be healed. It happened that the several volumes of his work lay for weeks in the study of our tutor. Chance directed the eye of my brother, one day, upon that part of the work in which Lord M. unfolds his hypothesis that originally the human race had been a variety of the ape. On which hypothesis, by the way, Dr. Adam Clarke's substitution of *ape* for *serpent*, in translating the word *nachash* (the brute tempter of Eve), would have fallen to the ground, since this would simply have been the case of one human being tempting another. It followed inevitably, according to Lord M., however painful it might be to human dignity, that, in this their early stage of brutality, men must have had tails. My brother mused upon this reverie, and, in a few days, published an extract from some scoundrel's travels in Gombroon, according to which the Gombroonians had not yet emerged from this early condition of apedom. They, it seems, were still *homines caudati*. Overwhelming to me and stunning was the ignominy of this horrible discovery. Lord M. had not overlooked the natural question, In what way did men get rid of their tails! To speak the truth, they never *would* have got rid of them had they continued to run wild; but growing civilisation introduced arts, and the arts introduced sedentary habits. By these it was, by the mere necessity of continually sitting down, that men gradually wore off their

tails! Well, and what should hinder the Gombroonians from sitting down? *Their* tailors and shoemakers would and could, I hope, sit down, as well as those of Tigrosylvania. Why not? Ay, but my brother had insisted already that they *had* no tailors, that they *had* no shoemakers; which, *then*, I did not care much about, as it merely put back the clock of our history—throwing us into an earlier, and therefore, perhaps, into a more warlike stage of society. But, as the case stood now, this want of tailors, &c., showed clearly that the process of sitting down, so essential to the ennobling of the race, had not commenced. My brother, with an air of consolation, suggested that I might even now, without an hour's delay, compel the whole nation to sit down for six hours a-day, which would always "make a beginning." But the truth would remain as before—viz., that I was the king of a people that had tails; and the slow, slow process by which, in a course of many centuries, their posterity might rub them off, a hope of vintages never to be enjoyed by any generations that are yet heaving in sight—*that* was to me the worst form of despair.

Still there was one resource: if I "didn't like it"—meaning the state of things in Gombroon—I might "abdicate." Yes, I knew *that*. I might abdicate; and, once having cut the connection between myself and the poor abject islanders, I might seem to have no further interest in the degradation that affected them. After such a disruption between us, what was it to me if they had even three tails apiece? Ah, *that* was fine talking; but this connection with my poor subjects had grown up so slowly and so genially, in the midst of struggles so constant against the encroachments of my brother and his rascally people; we had suffered so much together; and the filaments connecting them with my heart were so aerially fine and fantastic, but for that reason so inseverable, that I abated nothing of my anxiety on their account; making this difference only in my legislation and administrative cares, that I pursued them more in a spirit of despondency, and retreated more shyly from communicating them. It was in vain that my brother counselled me to dress my people in the Roman toga, as the best means of concealing their ignominious appendages: if

he meant this as comfort, it was none to me ; the disgrace lay in the fact, not in its publication ; and, in my heart, though I continued to honour Lord Monboddo (whom I heard my guardian also daily delighting to honour) as a good Grecian, yet secretly I cursed the Aoristus Primus, as the indirect occasion of a misery which was not and could not be comprehended.

From this deep degradation of myself and my people, I was drawn off at intervals to contemplate a different mode of degradation affecting two persons, twin sisters, whom I saw intermittingly ; sometimes once a-week, sometimes frequently on each separate day. You have heard, reader, of pariahs. The pathos of that great idea possibly never reached you. Did it ever strike you how far that idea had extended ? Do not fancy it peculiar to Hindostan. Before Delhi was, before Agra, or Lahore, might the pariah say, I was. The most interesting, if only as the most mysterious, race of ancient days, the Pelasgi, that overspread, in early times of Greece, the total Mediterranean—a race distinguished for beauty and for intellect, and sorrowful beyond all power of man to read the cause that could lie deep enough for so imperishable an impression—*they* were pariahs. The Jews that, in the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, were cursed in a certain contingency with a sublimer curse than ever rang through the passionate wrath of prophecy, and that afterwards, in Jerusalem, cursed themselves, voluntarily taking on their own heads, and on the heads of their children's children for ever and ever, the guilt of innocent blood—*they* are pariahs to this hour. Yet for *them* there has ever shone a sullen light of hope. The gipsies, for whom no conscious or acknowledged hope burns through the mighty darkness that surrounds them—they are pariahs of pariahs. Lepers were a race of mediæval pariahs, rejected of men, that now have gone to rest. But travel into the forests of the Pyrenees, and there you will find their modern representatives in the Cagots. Are these Pyrenean Cagots Pagans ? Not at all. They are good Christians. Wherefore, then, that low door in the Pyrenean churches, through which the Cagots are forced to enter, and which, obliging them to stoop almost to the ground, is a perpetual memento of their

degradation? Wherefore is it that men of pure Spanish blood will hold no intercourse with the Cagot? Wherefore is it that even the shadow of a Cagot, if it falls across a fountain, is held to have polluted that fountain? All this points to some dreadful taint of guilt, real or imputed, in ages far remote.[1]

But in ages far nearer to ourselves, nay, in our own generation, and our own land, are many pariahs, sitting amongst us all, nay, oftentimes sitting (yet not recognised for what they really are) at good men's tables. How general is that sensuous dulness, that deafness of the heart, which the Scriptures attribute to human beings! "Having ears, they hear not; and, seeing, they do not understand." In the very act of facing or touching a dreadful object, they will utterly deny its existence. Men say to me daily, when I ask them, in passing, "Anything in this morning's paper?" "Oh no, nothing at all." And, as I never had any other answer, I am bound to suppose that there never *was* anything in a daily newspaper; and, therefore, that the horrible burden of misery and of change which a century accumulates as its *facit* or total result, has not been distributed at all amongst its thirty-six thousand five hundred and twenty-five days: every day, it seems, was separately a blank day, yielding absolutely nothing—what children call a deaf nut, offering no kernel; and yet the total product has caused angels to weep and tremble. Meantime, when I come to look at the newspaper with my own eyes, I am astonished at the misreport of my

[1] The name and history of the Pyrenean Cagots are equally obscure. Some have supposed that, during the period of the Gothic warfare with the Moors, the Cagots were a Christian tribe that betrayed the Christian cause and interests at a critical moment. But all is conjecture. As to the name, Southey has somewhere offered a possible interpretation of it; but it struck me as far from felicitous, and not what might have been expected from Southey, whose vast historical research and commanding talent should naturally have unlocked this most mysterious of modern secrets, if any unlocking does yet lie within the resources of human skill and combining power, now that so many ages divide us from the original steps of the case. I may here mention, as a fact accidentally made known to myself, and apparently not known to Southey, that the Cagots, under a name very slightly altered, are found in France also, as well as Spain; and in provinces of France that have no connection at all with Spain.

informants. Were there no other section in it than simply that allotted to the police reports, oftentimes I stand aghast at the revelations there made of human life and the human heart—at its colossal guilt, and its colossal misery ; at the suffering which oftentimes throws its shadow over palaces, and the grandeur of mute endurance which sometimes glorifies a cottage. Here transpires the dreadful truth of what is going on for ever under the thick curtains of domestic life, close behind us, and before us, and all around us. Newspapers are evanescent, and are too rapidly recurrent, and people see nothing great in what is familiar, nor can ever be trained to read the silent and the shadowy in what, for the moment, is covered with the babbling garrulity of daylight. I suppose now that, in the next generation after that which is here concerned, had any neighbour of our tutor been questioned on the subject of a domestic tragedy, which travelled through its natural stages in a leisurely way, and under the eyes of good Dr. S——, he would have replied, "Tragedy ! oh, sir, nothing of the kind ! You have been misled ; the gentleman must lie under a mistake : perhaps it was in the next street." No, it was *not* in the next street ; and the gentleman does not lie under a mistake, or, in fact, lie at all. The simple truth is, blind old neighbour, that you, being rarely in the house, and, *when* there, only in one particular room, saw no more of what was hourly going on, than if you had been residing with the Sultan of Bokhara. But I, a child between seven and eight years old, had access everywhere. I was privileged, and had the *entrée* even of the female apartments ; one consequence of which was, that I put *this* and *that* together. A number of syllables, that each for itself separately might have meant nothing at all, did yet, when put together, through weeks and months, read for *my* eyes into sentences as deadly and significant as *Tekel, upharsin.* And another consequence was, that being, on account of my age, nobody at all, or very near it, I sometimes witnessed things that perhaps it had not been meant for anybody to witness, or perhaps some half-conscious negligence overlooked my presence. "Saw things ! What was it now? Was it a man at midnight, with a dark lantern and a six-barrel revolver ?" No *that* was not in the least like what I

saw: it was a great deal more like what I will endeavour to describe. Imagine two young girls, of what exact age I really do not know, but apparently from twelve to fourteen, twins, remarkably plain in person and features, unhealthy, and obscurely reputed to be idiots. Whether they really were such was more than I knew, or could devise any plan for learning. Without dreaming of anything unkind or uncourteous, my original impulse had been to say, "If you please, are you idiots?" But I felt that such a question had an air of coarseness about it, though, for my own part, I had long reconciled myself to being called an idiot by my brother. There was, however, a further difficulty: breathed as a gentle, murmuring whisper, the question might possibly be reconciled to an indulgent ear as confidential and tender. Even to take a liberty with those you love, is to show your trust in their affection; but, alas! these poor girls were deaf; and to have shouted out, "Are you idiots, if you please?" in a voice that would have rung down three flights of stairs, promised (as I felt, without exactly seeing why) a dreadful exaggeration to whatever incivility might, at any rate, attach to the question; and some *did* attach, that was clear even if warbled through an air of Cherubini's, and accompanied on the flute. Perhaps they were *not* idiots, and only seemed to be such from the slowness of apprehension naturally connected with deafness. That I saw them but seldom, arose from their peculiar position in the family. Their father had no private fortune; his income from the church was very slender; and, though considerably increased by the allowance made for us, his two pupils, still, in a great town, and with so large a family, it left him little room for luxuries. Consequently, he never had more than two servants, and at times only one. Upon this plea rose the scheme of the mother for employing these two young girls in menial offices of the household economy. One reason for that was, that she thus indulged her dislike for them, which she took no pains to conceal; and thus, also, she withdrew them from the notice of strangers. In this way, it happened that I saw them myself but at uncertain intervals. Gradually, however, I came to be aware of their forlorn condition, to pity them, and to love them. The poor twins were undoubtedly plain,

to the degree which is called, by unfeeling people, ugliness. They were also deaf, as I have said, and they were scrofulous; one of them was disfigured by the small-pox; they had glimmering eyes, red, like the eyes of ferrets, and scarcely half-open; and they did not walk so much as stumble along. There, you have the worst of them. Now, hear something on the other side. What first won my pity was, their affection for each other, united to their constant sadness; secondly, a notion which had crept into my head, probably derived from something said in my presence by elder people, that they were destined to an early death; and, lastly, the incessant persecutions of their mother. This lady belonged, by birth, to a more elevated rank than that of her husband, and she was remarkably well-bred as regarded her manners. But she had probably a weak understanding: she was shrewish in her temper; was a severe economist; a merciless exactor of what she viewed as duty; and, in persecuting her two unhappy daughters, though she yielded blindly to her unconscious dislike of them, as creatures that disgraced her, she was not aware, perhaps, of ever having put forth more expressions of anger and severity than were absolutely required to rouse the constitutional torpor of her daughters' nature; and where disgust has once rooted itself, and been habitually expressed in tones of harshness, the mere sight of the hateful object mechanically calls forth the eternal tones of anger, without distinct consciousness or separate intention in the speaker. Loud speaking, besides, or even shouting, was required by the deafness of the two girls. From anger so constantly discharging its thunders, naturally they did not show open signs of recoiling; but that they felt it deeply, may be presumed from their sensibility to kindness. My own experience showed *that;* for, as often as I met them, we exchanged kisses; and my wish had always been to beg them, if they really *were* idiots, not to mind it, since I should not like them the less on that account. This wish of mine never came to utterance; but not the less they were aware, by my manner of salutation, that one person at least, amongst those who might be considered strangers, did not find anything repulsive about them; and the pleasure they felt was expressed broadly upon their kindly faces.

Such was the outline of their position; and, that being explained, what I saw was simply this; it composed a silent and symbolic scene, a momentary interlude in dumb show, which interpreted itself and settled for ever in my recollection, as if it had prophesied and interpreted the event which soon followed. They were resting from toil, and both sitting down. This had lasted for perhaps ten or fifteen minutes. Suddenly from below-stairs the voice of angry summons rang up to their ears. Both rose in an instant, as if the echoing scourge of some avenging Tisiphone were uplifted above their heads; both opened their arms; flung them round each other's necks; and then, unclasping them, parted to their separate labours. This was my last rememberable interview with the two sisters; in a week both were corpses. They had died, I believe, of scarlatina, and very nearly at the same moment.

But surely it was no matter for grief, that the two scrofulous idiots were dead and buried. Oh no! Call them idiots at your pleasure, serfs, or slaves, strulbrugs[1] or pariahs

[1] "*Strulbrugs*":—Hardly *strulbrugs*, will be the thought of the learned reader, who knows that *young* women could not be strulbrugs; since the true strulbrug was one who, from base fear of dying, had lingered on into an old age omnivorous of every genial or vital impulse. The strulbrug of Swift (and Swift, being his horrid creator, ought to understand his own horrid creation) was a wreck, a shell, that had been burned hollow, and cancered by the fierce furnace of life. His clock-work was gone, or carious; only some miserable fragment of a pendulum continued to oscillate paralytically from mere incapacity of anything so abrupt, and therefore so vigorous, as a decided HALT! However, the use of this dreadful word may be reasonably extended to the young who happen to have become essentially old in misery. Intensity of a suffering existence may compensate the want of extension; and a boundless depth of misery may be a transformed expression for a boundless duration of misery. The most aged person, to all appearance, that ever came under my eyes, was an infant—hardly eight months old. He was the illegitimate son of a poor idiot girl, who had herself been shamefully ill-treated; and the poor infant, falling under the care of an enraged grandmother, who felt herself at once burdened and disgraced, was certainly not better treated. He was dying, when I saw him, of a lingering malady, with features expressive of frantic misery; and it seemed to me that he looked at least three centuries old. One might have fancied him one of Swift's strulbrugs, that, through long attenuation and decay, had dwindled back into infancy, with one organ only left perfect—the organ of fear and misery.

—*their* case was certainly not worsened by being booked for places in the grave. Idiocy, for anything I know, may, in that vast kingdom, enjoy a natural precedency ; scrofula and leprosy may have some mystic privilege in a coffin ; and the pariahs of the upper earth may form the aristocracy of the dead. That the idiots, real or reputed, were at rest—that their warfare was accomplished—might, if a man happened to know enough, be interpreted as a glorious festival. The sisters were seen no more upon staircases or in bedrooms, and deadly silence had succeeded to the sound of continual uproars. Memorials of *them* were none surviving on earth. Not *they* it was that furnished mementoes of themselves. The mother it was, the father it was—that mother who by persecution had avenged the wounds offered to her pride ; that father who had tolerated this persecution ;—she it was, he it was, that by the altered glances of her haunted eye, that by the altered character of his else stationary habits, had revived for *me* a spectacle, once real, of visionary twin sisters, moving for ever up and down the stairs—sisters, patient, humble, silent, that snatched convulsively at a loving smile, or loving gesture, from a child, as at some message of remembrance from God, whispering to them, "You are not forgotten"—sisters born apparently for the single purpose of suffering, whose trials, it is true, were over, and could not be repeated, but (alas for her who had been their cause !) could not be recalled. Her face grew thin, her eye sunken and hollow, after the death of her daughters ; and, meeting her on the staircase, I sometimes fancied that she did not see *me* so much as something beyond me. Did any misfortune befall her after this double funeral ? Did the Nemesis that waits upon the sighs of children pursue her steps ? Not apparently : externally, things went well ; her sons were reasonably prosperous ; her handsome daughter—for she had a more youthful daughter, who really *was* handsome—continued to improve in personal attractions ; and some years after, I have heard, she married happily. But from herself, so long as I continued to know her, the altered character of countenance did not depart, nor the gloomy eye, that seemed to converse with secret and visionary objects.

This result from the irrevocable past was not altogether

confined to herself. It is one evil attached to chronic and domestic oppression, that it draws into its vortex, as unwilling, or even as loathing, co-operators, others who either see but partially the wrong they are abetting, or, in cases where they *do* see it, are unable to make head against it, through the inertia of their own nature, or through the coercion of circumstances. Too clearly, by the restless irritation of his manner for some time after the children's death, their father testified, in a language not fully, perhaps, perceived by himself, or meant to be understood by others, that to his inner conscience he also was not clear of blame. Had he then in any degree sanctioned the injustice which sometimes he must have witnessed? Far from it: he had been roused from his habitual indolence into energetic expressions of anger: he had put an end to the wrong, when it came openly before him: I had myself heard him say on many occasions, with patriarchal fervour, "Woman, they are your children, and God made them. Show mercy to *them*, as you expect it for yourself." But he must have been aware, that, for any three instances of tyrannical usage that fell under his notice, at least five hundred would escape it. That was the sting of the case—that was its poisonous aggravation. But with a nature that sought for peace before all things, in this very worst of its aggravations was found a morbid cure—the effectual temptation to wilful blindness and forgetfulness. The sting became the palliation of the wrong, and the poison became its anodyne. For together with the five hundred hidden wrongs, arose the necessity that they *must* be hidden. Could he be pinned on, morning, noon, and night, to his wife's apron? And if not, what else should he do by angry interferences at chance times, than add special vindictive impulses to those of general irritation and dislike? Some truth there was in this, it cannot be denied: innumerable cases arise, in which a man the most just is obliged, in some imperfect sense, to connive at injustice; his chance experience must convince him that injustice is continually going on; and yet, in any attempt to intercept it or to check it, he is met and baffled by the insuperable obstacles of household necessities. Dr. S——, therefore, surrendered himself, as under a coercion that was *none* of his creating, to a passive

acquiescence and a blindness that soothed his constitutional indolence; and he reconciled his feelings to a tyranny which he tolerated, under some self-flattering idea of submitting with resignation to a calamity that he suffered.

Some years after this, I read the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus; and then, in the prophetic horror with which Cassandra surveys the regal abode in Mycenæ, destined to be the scene of murders so memorable through the long traditions of the Grecian stage, murders that, many centuries after all the parties to them—perpetrators, sufferers, avengers—had become dust and ashes, kindled again into mighty life through a thousand years upon the vast theatres of Athens and Rome, I retraced the horrors, not prophetic but memorial, with which I myself had invested that humble dwelling of Dr. S——; and read again, repeated in visionary proportions, the sufferings which there had darkened the days of people known to myself through two distinct successions—not, as was natural to expect, of parents first, and then of children, but inversely of children and parents. Manchester was not Mycenæ. No, but by many degrees nobler. In some of the features most favourable to tragic effects, it was so; and wanted only those idealising advantages for withdrawing mean details which are in the gift of distance and hazy antiquity. Even at that day Manchester was far larger, teeming with more and with stronger hearts; and it contained a population the most energetic even in the *modern* world—how much more so, therefore, by comparison with any race in *ancient* Greece, inevitably rendered effeminate by dependence too generally upon slaves. Add to this superior energy in Lancashire, the immeasurably profounder feelings generated by the mysteries which stand behind Christianity, as compared with the shallow mysteries that stood behind Paganism, and it would be easy to draw the inference, that, in the capacity for the infinite and the impassioned, for horror and for pathos, Mycenæ could have had no pretensions to measure herself against Manchester. Not that I had drawn such an inference myself. Why should I? there being nothing to suggest the points in which the two cities differed, but only the single one in which they agreed—viz., the dusky veil that overshadowed in both the

noonday tragedies haunting their household recesses ; which veil was raised only to the gifted eyes of a Cassandra, or to eyes that, like my own, had experimentally become acquainted with them as facts. Pitiably mean is he that measures the relations of such cases by the scenical apparatus of purple and gold. That which never *has* been apparelled in royal robes, and hung with theatrical jewels, is but suffering from an accidental fraud, having the same right to them that any similar misery can have, or calamity upon an equal scale. These proportions are best measured from the fathoming ground of a real uncounterfeit sympathy.

I have mentioned already that we had four male guardians (a fifth being my mother). These four were B., E., G., and H. The two consonants, B. and G., gave us little trouble. G., the wisest of the whole band, lived at a distance of more than one hundred miles : him, therefore, we rarely saw ; but B., living within four miles of Greenhay, washed his hands of us, by inviting us, every now and then, to spend a few days at his house.

At this house, which stood in the country, there was a family of amiable children, who were more skilfully trained in their musical studies than at that day was usual. They sang the old English glees and madrigals, and correctly enough for me, who, having, even at that childish age, a preternatural sensibility to music, had also, as may be supposed, the most entire want of musical knowledge. No blunders could do much to mar *my* pleasure. There first I heard the concertos of Corelli ; but also, which far more profoundly affected me, a few selections from Jomelli and Cimarosa. With Handel I had long been familiar, for the famous chorus-singers of Lancashire sang continually at churches the most effective parts from his chief oratorios. Mozart was yet to come ; for, except perhaps at the opera in London, even at this time his music was most imperfectly diffused through England. But, above all, a thing which to my dying day I could never forget, at the house of this guardian I heard sung a long canon of Cherubini's. Forty years later, I heard it again, and better sung ; but at that time I needed nothing better. It was sung by four male voices, and rose into a region of

thrilling passion, such as my heart had always dimly craved and hungered after, but which now first interpreted itself, as a physical possibility, to my ear.

My brother did not share my inexpressible delight ; his taste ran in a different channel ; and the arrangements of the house did not meet his approbation ; particularly this, that either Mrs. B. herself, or else the governess, was always present when the young ladies joined our society, which my brother considered particularly vulgar ; since natural propriety and decorum should have whispered to an old lady that a young gentleman might have "things" to say to her daughters which he could not possibly intend for the general ear of eavesdroppers—things tending to the confidential or the sentimental, which none but a shameless old lady would seek to participate ; by that means compelling a young man to talk as loud as if he were addressing a mob at Charing Cross, or reading the Riot Act. There were other out-of-door amusements, amongst which a swing—which I mention for the sake of illustrating the passive obedience which my brother levied upon me, either through my conscience, as mastered by his doctrine of primogeniture, or, as in this case, through my sensibility to shame under his taunts of cowardice. It was a most ambitious swing, ascending to a height beyond any that I have since seen in fairs or public gardens. Horror was at my heart regularly as the swing reached its most aerial altitude ; for the oily, swallow-like fluency of the swoop downwards threatened always to make me sick, in which case it is probable that I must have relaxed my hold of the ropes, and have been projected, with fatal violence, to the ground. But, in defiance of all this miserable panic, I continued to swing whenever he tauntingly invited me. It was well that my brother's path in life soon ceased to coincide with my own ; else I should infallibly have broken my neck in confronting perils which brought me neither honour nor profit, and in accepting defiances which, issue how they might, won self-reproach from myself, and sometimes a gaiety of derision from *him*. One only of these defiances I declined. There was a horse of this same guardian B.'s, who always, after listening to Cherubini's music, grew irritable to excess ; and, if anybody mounted him, would seek relief to his wounded

feelings in kicking, more or less violently, for an hour. This habit endeared him to my brother, who acknowledged to a propensity of the same amiable kind; protesting that an abstract desire of kicking seized him always after hearing good performers on particular instruments, especially the bagpipes. Of kicking? But of kicking what or *whom?* I fear of kicking the venerable public collectively, creditors without exception, but also as many of the debtors as might be found at large; doctors of medicine more especially, but with no absolute immunity for the majority of their patients; Jacobins, but not the less Anti-Jacobins; every Calvinist, which seems reasonable; but then also, which is intolerable, every Arminian. Is philosophy able to account for this morbid affection, and particularly when it takes the restricted form (as sometimes it does, in the bagpipe case) of seeking furiously to kick the piper, instead of paying him? In this case, my brother was urgent with me to mount *en croupe* behind himself. But, weak as I usually was, this proposal I resisted as an immediate suggestion of the fiend; for I had heard, and have since known proofs of it, that a horse, when he is ingeniously vicious, sometimes has the power, in lashing out, of curving round his hoofs, so as to lodge them, by way of indorsement, in the small of his rider's back; and, of course, he would have an advantage for such a purpose, in the case of a rider sitting on the crupper. That sole invitation I persisted in declining.

A young gentleman had joined us as a fellow-student under the care of our tutor. He was an only son; indeed, the only child of an amiable widow, whose love and hopes all centred in *him.* He was destined to inherit several separate estates, and a great deal had been done to spoil him by indulgent aunts; but his good natural disposition defeated all these efforts; and, upon joining us, he proved to be a very amiable boy, clever, quick at learning, and abundantly courageous. In the summer months, his mother usually took a house out in the country, sometimes on one side of Manchester, sometimes on another. At these rusticating seasons, he had often much further to come than ourselves, and on that account he rode on horseback. Generally it was a fierce mountain-pony that he rode; and it was worth while to

cultivate the pony's acquaintance, for the sake of understanding the extent to which the fiend can sometimes incarnate himself in a horse. I do not trouble the reader with any account of his tricks, and drolleries, and scoundrelisms; but this I may mention, that he had the propensity ascribed many centuries ago to the Scandinavian horses for sharing and practically asserting his share in the angry passions of a battle. He would fight, or attempt to fight, on his rider's side, by biting, rearing, and suddenly wheeling round, for the purpose of lashing out when he found himself within kicking range.[1] This little monster was coal-black; and, in virtue of his carcase, would not have seemed very formidable; but his head made amends—it was the head of a buffalo, or of a bison, and his vast jungle of mane was the mane of a lion. His eyes, by reason of this intolerable and unshorn mane, one did not often see, except as lights that sparkled in the rear of a thicket; but, once seen, they were not easily forgotten, for their malignity was diabolic. A few miles more or less being a matter of indifference to one who was so well mounted, O. would sometimes ride out with us to the field of battle; and, by manœuvring so as to menace the enemy on the flanks, in skirmishes he did good service. But at length came a day of pitched battle. The enemy had mustered in unusual strength, and would certainly have accomplished the usual result of putting us to flight with more than usual ease, but, under the turn which things took, their very numbers aided their overthrow, by deepening their confusion. O. had, on this occasion, accompanied us; and, as he had hitherto taken no very decisive part in the war, confining himself to distant "demonstrations," the enemy did not much regard his presence in the field. This carelessness threw them into a dense mass, upon which my brother's rapid eye saw instantly the opportunity offered for operating most effectually by a charge. O. saw it too; and happening to have his spurs on, he complied cheerfully with my brother's suggestion. He had the advantage of a slight descent: the wicked pony went down "with a will": his echoing hoofs drew the general gaze

[1] This was a manœuvre regularly taught to the Austrian cavalry in the middle of the last century, as a ready way of opening the doors of cottages.

upon him : his head, his leonine mane, his diabolic eyes, did the rest ; and in a moment the whole hostile array had broken, and was in rapid flight across the brick-fields. I leave the reader to judge whether "Te Deum" would be sung on that night. A Gazette Extraordinary was issued ; and my brother had really some reason for his assertion, "that in conscience he could not think of comparing Cannæ to this smashing defeat" ; since at Cannæ many brave men had refused to fly—the consul himself, Terentius Varro, amongst them ; but, in the present rout, there was no Terentius Varro—*everybody* fled.

The victory, indeed, considered in itself, was complete. But it had consequences which we had not looked for. In the ardour of our conflict, neither my brother nor myself had remarked a stout, square-built man, mounted on an uneasy horse, who sat quietly in his saddle as spectator of the battle, and, in fact, as the sole non-combatant present. This man, however, had been observed by O., both before and after his own brilliant charge ; and, by the description, there could be no doubt that it had been our guardian B., as also, by the description of the horse, we could as little doubt that he had been mounted on Cherubini. My brother's commentary was in a tone of bitter complaint, that so noble an opportunity should have been lost for strengthening O.'s charge. But the consequences of this incident were graver than we anticipated. A general board of our guardians, vowels and consonants, was summoned to investigate the matter. The origin of the feud, or "war," as my brother called it, was inquired into. As well might the war of Troy or the purser's accounts from the Argonautic expedition have been overhauled. Ancient night and chaos had closed over the "incunabula belli" ; and that point was given up in despair. But what hindered a general pacification, no matter in how many wrongs the original dispute had arisen ? Who stopped the way which led to peace ? Not we, was our firm declaration ; we were most pacifically inclined, and ever had been ; we were, in fact, little saints. But the enemy could not be brought to any terms of accommodation. "That we will try," said the vowel amongst our guardians, Mr. E. He, being a magistrate, had naturally some weight with the pro-

prietors of the cotton factory. The foremen of the several floors were summoned, and gave it as their humble opinion that we, the aristocratic party in the war, were as bad as the *sansculottes*—"not a pin to choose between us." Well, but no matter for the past: could any plan be devised for a pacific future? Not easily. The work-people were so thoroughly independent of their employers, and so careless of their displeasure, that finally this only settlement was available, as wearing any promise of permanence—viz., that we should alter our hours, so as not to come into collision with the exits or returns of the boys.

Under this arrangement, a sort of hollow armistice prevailed for some time; but it was beginning to give way, when suddenly an internal change in our own home put an end to the war for ever. My brother, amongst his many accomplishments, was distinguished for his skill in drawing. Some of his sketches had been shown to Mr. de Loutherbourg, an academician well known in those days, esteemed even in these days, after he has been dead for forty or fifty years, and personally a distinguished favourite with the king (George III). He pronounced a very flattering opinion upon my brother's promise of excellence. This being known, a fee of a thousand guineas was offered to Mr. L. by the guardians; and finally that gentleman took charge of my brother as a pupil. Now, therefore, my brother, King of Tigrosylvania, scourge of Gombroon, separated from me; and, as it turned out, for ever. I never saw him again; and, at Mr. de L.'s house in Hammersmith, before he had completed his sixteenth year, he died of typhus fever. And thus it happened that a little gold-dust skilfully applied put an end to wars that else threatened to extend into a Carthaginian length. In one week's time

> "Hi motus animorum atque hæc certamina tanta
> Pulveris exigui jactu compressa quiêrunt."

. . . . . .

Here I had terminated this chapter—as at a natural pause, which, whilst shutting out for ever my eldest brother from the reader's sight and from my own, necessarily at the same moment worked a permanent revolution in the

character of my daily life. Two such changes, and both so abrupt, indicated imperiously the close of one era and the opening of another. The advantages, indeed, which my brother had over me in years, in physical activities of every kind, in decision of purpose, and in energy of will—all which advantages, besides, borrowed a ratification from an obscure sense, on my part, of duty as incident to what seemed an appointment of Providence—inevitably *had* controlled, and for years to come *would have* controlled, the free spontaneous movements of a contemplative dreamer like myself. Consequently, this separation, which proved an eternal one, and contributed to deepen my constitutional propensity to gloomy meditation, had for me (partly on that account, but much more through the sudden birth of perfect independence which so unexpectedly it opened) the value of a revolutionary experience. A new date, a new starting-point, a redemption (as it might be called) into the golden sleep of halcyon quiet, after everlasting storms, suddenly dawned upon me; and not as any casual intercalation of holidays that would come to an end—but, for anything that appeared to the contrary, as the perpetual tenor of my future career. No longer was the factory a Carthage for me: if any obdurate old Cato there were who found his amusement in denouncing it with a daily "*Delenda est*," take notice (I said silently to myself), that I acknowledge no such tiger for a friend of mine. Never more was the bridge across the Irwell a bridge of sighs for me. And the meanest of the factory population—thanks be to their discrimination—despised my pretensions too entirely to waste a thought or a menace upon a cipher so abject.

This change, therefore, being so sudden and so total, ought to signalise itself externally by a commensurate break in the narrative. A new chapter, at the least, with a huge interspace of blank white paper, or even a new book, ought rightfully to solemnise so profound a revolution. And virtually it shall. But, according to the general agreement of antiquity, it is not felt as at all disturbing to the unity of that event which winds up the "Iliad"—viz., the death of Hector—that Homer expands it circumstantially into the whole ceremonial of his funeral obsequies: and upon that

same principle I, when looking back to this abrupt close of all connection with my brother—whether in my character of major-general, or of potentate trembling daily for my people —am reminded that the very last morning of this connection had its own separate distinction from all other mornings, in a way that entitles it to its own separate share in the general commemoration. A shadow fell upon this particular morning as from a cloud of danger that lingered for a moment over our heads, might seem even to muse and hesitate, and then sullenly passed away into distant quarters. It is noticeable that a danger which approaches, but wheels away—which threatens, but finally forbears to strike—is more interesting by much on a distant retrospect than the danger which accomplishes its mission. The Alpine precipice, down which many pilgrims have fallen, is passed without much attention ; but that precipice, within one inch of which a traveller has passed unconsciously in the dark, first tracing his peril along the snowy margin on the next morning, becomes invested with an attraction of horror for all who hear the story. The dignity of mortal danger ever after consecrates the spot ; and, in this particular case which I am now recalling, the remembrance of such a danger consecrates the day.

That day was amongst the most splendid in a splendid June : it was, to borrow the line of Wordsworth,

"One of those heavenly days which cannot die :"

and, early as it was at that moment, we children, all six of us that then survived, were already abroad upon the lawn. There were two lawns at Greenhay in the shrubbery that invested three sides of the house : one of these, which ran along one side of the house, extended to a little bridge traversed by the gates of entrance. The central gate admitted carriages : on each side of this was a smaller gate for foot passengers ; and, in a family containing so many as six children, it may be supposed that often enough one or other of the gates was open ; which, most fortunately, on this day was not the case. Along the margin of this side-lawn ran a little brook, which had been raised to a uniform level, and kept up by means of a weir at the point where it quitted the premises ; after which it resumed its natural

character of wildness, as it trotted on to the little hamlet of Greenhill. This brook my brother was at one time disposed to treat as Remus treated the infant walls of Rome ; but, on maturer thoughts, having built a fleet of rafts, he treated it more respectfully ; and this morning, as will be seen, the breadth of the little brook did us "yeoman's service." Me at one time he had meant to put on board this fleet, as his man Friday ; and I had a fair prospect of first entering life in the respectable character of supercargo. But it happened that the current carried his rafts and himself over the weir ; which, he assured us, was no accident, but a lesson by way of practice in the art of contending with the rapids of the St. Lawrence and other Canadian streams. However, as the danger had been considerable, he was prohibited from trying such experiments with me. On the centre of the lawn stood my eldest surviving sister, Mary, and my brother William. Round *him*, attracted (as ever) by his inexhaustible opulence of thought and fun, stood, laughing and dancing, my youngest sister, a second Jane, and my youngest brother Henry, a posthumous child, feeble, and in his nurse's arms, but on this morning showing signs of unusual animation and of sympathy with the glorious promise of the young June day. Whirling round on his heel, at a little distance, and utterly abstracted from all around him, my next brother, Richard, he that had caused so much affliction by his incorrigible morals to the Sultan Amurath, pursued his own solitary thoughts — whatever those might be. And, finally, as regards myself, it happened that I was standing close to the edge of the brook, looking back at intervals to the group of five children and two nursemaids who occupied the centre of the lawn ; time, about an hour before *our* breakfast, or about two hours before the world's breakfast—*i.e.*, a little after seven—when as yet in shady parts of the grounds the dazzling jewellery of the early dews had not entirely exhaled. So standing, and so occupied, suddenly we were alarmed by shouts as of some great mob manifestly in rapid motion, and probably, at this instant, taking the right-angled turn into the lane connecting Greenhay with the Oxford Road. The shouts indicated hostile and headlong pursuit : within one minute, another right-

angled turn in the lane itself brought the uproar fully upon the ear ; and it became evident that some imminent danger —of what nature it was impossible to guess—must be hastily nearing us. We were all rooted to the spot ; and all turned anxiously to the gates, which happily seemed to be closed. Had this been otherwise, we should have had no time to apply any remedy whatever, and the consequences must probably have involved us all. In a few seconds, a powerful dog, not much above a furlong ahead of his pursuers, wheeled into sight. We all saw him pause at the gates ; but, finding no ready access through the iron lattice-work that protected the side battlements of the little bridge, and the pursuit being so hot, he resumed his course along the outer margin of the brook. Coming opposite to myself, he made a dead stop. I had thus an opportunity of looking him steadily in the face ; which I did, without more fear than belonged naturally to a case of so much hurry, and to me, in particular, of mystery. I had never heard of hydrophobia. But, necessarily connecting the furious pursuit with the dog that now gazed at me from the opposite side of the water, and, feeling obliged to presume that he had made an assault upon somebody or other, I looked searchingly into his eyes, and observed that they seemed glazed, and as if in a dreamy state, but at the same time suffused with some watery discharge, while his mouth was covered with masses of white foam. He looked most earnestly at myself and the group beyond me ; but he made no effort whatever to cross the brook, and apparently had not the energy to attempt it by a flying leap. My brother William, who did not in the least suspect the real danger, invited the dog to try his chance in a leap—assuring him that, if he succeeded, he would knight him on the spot. The temptation of a knighthood, however, did not prove sufficient. A very few seconds brought his pursuers within sight ; and steadily, without sound or gesture of any kind, he resumed his flight in the only direction open to him—viz., by a field-path across stiles to Greenhill. Half-an-hour later he would have met a bevy of children going to a dame's school, or carrying milk to rustic neighbours. As it was, the early morning kept the road clear in front. But behind immense was the body of agitated pursuers. Leading the

chase, came, probably, half a troop of light cavalry, all on foot, nearly all in their stable dresses, and armed generally with pitchforks, though some eight or ten carried carbines. Half-mingled with these, and very little in the rear, succeeded a vast miscellaneous mob, that had gathered on the chase as it hurried through the purlieus of Deansgate, and all that populous suburb of Manchester. From some of these, who halted to recover breath, we obtained an explanation of the affair. About a mile and a-half from Greenhay stood some horse-barracks, occupied usually by an entire regiment of cavalry. A large dog—one of a multitude that haunted the barracks—had for some days manifested an increasing sullenness, snapping occasionally at dogs and horses, but finally at men. Upon this he had been tied up ; but in some way he had this morning liberated himself: two troop horses he had immediately bitten; and had made attacks upon several of the men, who fortunately parried these attacks by means of the pitchforks standing ready to their hands. On this evidence, coupled with the knowledge of his previous illness, he was summarily condemned as mad ; and the general pursuit commenced, which brought all parties (hunters and game) sweeping so wildly past the quiet grounds of Greenhay. The sequel of the affair was this: none of the carbineers succeeded in getting a shot at the dog ; in consequence of which, the chase lasted for seventeen miles nominally ; but, allowing for all the doublings and headings-back of the dog, by computation for about twenty-four : and finally, in a state of utter exhaustion, he was run into, and killed, somewhere in Cheshire. Of the two horses whom he had bitten, both treated alike, one died in a state of furious hydrophobia some two months later, but the other (though the more seriously wounded of the two) manifested no symptoms whatever of constitutional derangement. And thus it happened that for me this general event of separation from my eldest brother, and the particular morning on which it occurred, were each for itself separately and equally memorable. Freedom won and death escaped, almost in the same hour—freedom from a yoke of such secret and fretful annoyance as none could measure but myself—and death probably through the fiercest of torments ; these double cases of

deliverance, so sudden and so *unlooked for*, signalised, by what heraldically might have been described as a two-headed memorial, the establishment of an *epoch* in my life. Not only was the Chapter of INFANCY thus solemnly finished for ever, and the record closed ; but—which cannot often happen —the chapter was closed pompously and conspicuously, by what the early printers through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries would have called a bright and illuminated Colophon.

CHAPTER IV

INFANT LITERATURE [1]

"*The child*," says Wordsworth, "*is father of the man*"; thus calling into conscious notice the fact, else faintly or not at all perceived, that whatsoever is seen in the maturest adult, blossoming and bearing fruit, must have pre-existed by way of germ in the infant. Yes; all that is now broadly emblazoned in the man, once was latent—seen or not seen—as a vernal bud in the child. But not, therefore, is it true inversely—that all which pre-exists in the child finds its development in the man. Rudiments and tendencies, which *might* have found, sometimes by accidental, *do* not find, sometimes under the killing frost of counter forces *cannot* find, their natural evolution. Infancy, therefore, is to be viewed, not only as part of a larger world that waits for its final complement in old age, but also as a separate world itself; part of a continent, but also a distinct peninsula. Most of what he has, the grown-up man inherits from his infant self; but it does not follow that he always enters upon the whole of his natural inheritance.

Childhood, therefore, in the midst of its intellectual weakness, and sometimes even by means of this weakness, enjoys a limited privilege of strength. The heart in this season of life is apprehensive; and, where its sensibilities

[1] Chiefly a corrected and abridged reproduction of what had been the sixth of the series of articles contributed by De Quincey to *Hogg's Instructor* in 1851-52, under the general title of "A Sketch from Childhood." This particular article had there borne the sub-title "Literature of Infancy."—M.

are profound, is endowed with a special power of listening for the tones of truth—hidden, struggling, or remote: for, the knowledge being then narrow, the interest is narrow in the objects of knowledge: consequently the sensibilities are not scattered, are not multiplied, are not crushed and confounded (as afterwards they are) under the burden of that distraction which lurks in the infinite littleness of details.

That mighty silence which infancy is thus privileged by nature and by position to enjoy, co-operates with another source of power—almost peculiar to youth and youthful circumstances—which Wordsworth also was the first person to notice. It belongs to a profound experience of the relations subsisting between ourselves and nature—that not always are we called upon to seek; sometimes, and in childhood above all, we are sought.

> "Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
> Of things for ever speaking,
> That nothing *of itself* will come,
> But we must still be seeking?"
>
> . . . . .

And again—

> "Nor less I deem that there are pow'rs
> Which *of themselves* our minds impress;
> And we can feed this mind of ours
> In a wise passiveness."

These cases of infancy, reached at intervals by special revelations, or creating for itself, through its privileged silence of heart, authentic whispers of truth, or beauty, or power, have some analogy to those other cases, more directly supernatural, in which (according to the old traditional faith of our ancestors) deep messages of admonition reached an individual through sudden angular deflexions of words, uttered or written, that had not been originally addressed to himself. Of these, there were two distinct classes—those where the person concerned had been purely passive, and, secondly, those in which he himself had to some extent co-operated. The first class have been noticed by Cowper the poet, and by George Herbert, the well-known pious brother of the still better known infidel, Lord Herbert (of Cherbury), in a memorable sonnet; scintillations they are of what seem nothing less than providential lights,

oftentimes arresting our attention, from the very centre of what else seems the blank darkness of chance and blind accident. "Books lying open, millions of surprises"—these are among the cases to which Herbert (and to which Cowper) alludes—books, that is to say, left casually open without design or consciousness, from which some careless passer-by, when throwing the most negligent of glances upon the page, has been startled by a solitary word, lying, as it were, in ambush, waiting and lurking for *him*, and looking at him steadily as an eye searching the haunted places in his conscience. These cases are in principle identical with those of the *second* class, where the inquirer himself co-operated, or was not entirely passive; cases such as those which the Jews called Bath-col, or daughter of a voice (the echo augury [1])—viz., where a man, perplexed in judgment, and sighing for some determining counsel, suddenly heard from a stranger in some unlooked-for quarter words not meant for himself, but clamorously applying to the difficulty besetting him. In these instances, the mystical word, that carried a secret meaning and message to one sole ear in the world, was always unsought for: *that* constituted its virtue and its divinity; and to arrange means wilfully for catching at such casual words would have defeated the purpose. A well-known variety of augury, conducted upon this principle, lay in the "Sortes Biblicæ,"

[1] "*Echo augury*":—The daughter of a voice meant an echo, the original sound being viewed as the mother, and the reverberation, or secondary sound, as the daughter. Analogically, therefore, the direct and original meaning of any word, or sentence, or counsel, was the mother meaning; but the secondary, or mystical meaning, created by peculiar circumstances for one separate and peculiar ear, the daughter meaning, or echo meaning. This mode of augury, through secondary interpretations of chance words, is not, as some readers may fancy, an old, obsolete, or merely Jewish form of seeking the divine pleasure. About a century ago, a man so famous, and by repute so unsuperstitious, as Dr. Doddridge, was guided in a primary act of choice, influencing his whole after life, by a few chance words from a child reading aloud to his mother. With the other mode of augury—viz., that noticed by Herbert—where not the ear but the eye presides, catching at some word that chance has thrown upon the eye in some book left open by negligence, or opened at random by one's-self, Cowper the poet, and his friend Newton, with scores of others that could be mentioned, were made acquainted through practical results and personal experiences that in *their* belief were memorably important.

where the Bible was the oracular book consulted, and far more extensively at a later period in the "Sortes Virgilianæ,"[1] where the Æneid was the oracle consulted.

Something analogous to these spiritual transfigurations of a word or a sentence, by a bodily organ (eye or ear) that has been touched with virtue for evoking the spiritual echo lurking in its recesses, belongs, perhaps, to every impassioned mind for the kindred result of forcing out the peculiar beauty, pathos, or grandeur, that may happen to lodge (unobserved by ruder forms of sensibility) in special passages scattered up and down literature. Meantime, I wish the reader to understand that, in putting forward the peculiar power with which my childish eye detected a grandeur or a pomp of beauty not seen by others in some special instances, I am not arrogating more than it is lawful for every man the very humblest to arrogate—viz., an individuality of mental constitution so far applicable to special and exceptional cases as to reveal in *them* a life and power of beauty which others (and sometimes, which *all* others) had missed.

The first case belongs to the march (or boundary) line between my eighth and ninth years: the others to a period

[1] "*Sortes Virgilianæ*":—Upon what principle could it have been that Virgil was adopted as the oracular fountain in such a case? An author so limited even as to bulk, and much more limited as regards compass of thought and variety of situation or character, was about the worst that Pagan literature offered. But I myself once threw out a suggestion, which (if it is sound) exposes a motive in behalf of such a choice that would be likely to overrule the strong motives against it. That motive was, unless my whole speculation is groundless, the very same which led Dante, in an age of ignorance, to select Virgil as his guide in Hades. The seventh son of a seventh son has always traditionally been honoured as the depositary of magical and other supernatural gifts. And the same traditional privilege attached to any man whose maternal grandfather was a sorcerer. Now it happened that Virgil's maternal grandfather bore the name of *Magus*. This, by the ignorant multitude in Naples, &c., who had been taught to reverence his tomb, was translated from its true acceptation as a proper name, to a false one as an appellative; it was supposed to indicate not the name, but the profession of the old gentleman. And thus, according to the belief of the Lazzaroni, that excellent Christian, P. Virgilius Maro, had stepped by mere succession and right of inheritance into his wicked old grandpapa's infernal powers and knowledge, both of which he exercised, doubtless, for centuries without blame, and for the benefit of the faithful.

earlier by two and a-half years. But I notice the latest case before the others, as it connected itself with a great epoch in the movement of my intellect. There is a dignity to every man in the mere historical assigning, if accurately he *can* assign, the first dawning upon his mind of any god-like faculty or apprehension, and more especially if that first dawning happened to connect itself with circumstances of individual or incommunicable splendour. The passage which I am going to cite first of all revealed to me the immeasurableness of the morally sublime. What was it, and where was it? Strange the reader will think it, and strange [1] it is, that a case of colossal sublimity should first emerge from such a writer as Phædrus the Æsopian fabulist. A great mistake it was, on the part of Doctor S., that the second book in the Latin language which I was summoned to study should have been Phædrus—a writer ambitious of investing the simplicity, or rather homeliness, of Æsop with aulic graces and satiric brilliancy. But so it was; and Phædrus naturally towered into enthusiasm when he had occasion to mention that the most intellectual of all races amongst men (viz., the Athenians) had raised a mighty statue to one who belonged to the same class in a social sense as himself (viz., the class of slaves), and rose above that class by the same intellectual power applying itself to the same object (viz., the moral apologue). These were the two lines in which that glory of the sublime, so stirring to my childish sense, seemed to burn as in some mighty pharos :—

> "Æsopo statuam ingentem posuere Attici;
> Servumque collocârunt eternâ in basi":

A colossal statue did the Athenians raise to Æsop; and a poor pariah slave they planted upon an everlasting pedestal. I have not scrupled to introduce the word *pariah*, because in that way only could I decipher to the reader by what particular avenue it was that the sublimity which I fancy in the passage reached my heart. This sublimity originated in the awful

[1] "*Strange*," &c.:—Yet I remember that, in "The Pursuits of Literature"—a satirical poem once universally famous—the lines about Mnemosyne and her daughters, the Pierides, are cited as exhibiting matchless sublimity. Perhaps, therefore, if carefully searched, this writer may contain other jewels not yet appreciated.

chasm, in the abyss that no eye could bridge, between the pollution of slavery—the being a man, yet without right or lawful power belonging to a man—between this unutterable degradation and the starry altitude of the slave at that moment when, upon the unveiling of his everlasting statue, all the armies of the earth might be conceived as presenting arms to the emancipated man, the cymbals and kettle-drums of kings as drowning the whispers of his ignominy, and the harps of all his sisters that wept over slavery yet joining in one choral gratulation to the regenerated slave. I assign the elements of what I did in reality feel at that time, which to the reader may seem extravagant, and by no means of what it was reasonable to feel. But, in order that full justice may be done to my childish self, I must point out to the reader another source of what strikes me as real grandeur. Horace, that exquisite master of the lyre, and that most shallow of critics, it is needless to say that in those days I had not read. Consequently I knew nothing of his idle canon, that the opening of poems must be humble and subdued. But my own sensibility told me how much of additional grandeur accrued to these two lines as being the immediate and all-pompous *opening* of the poem. The same feeling I had received from the crashing overture to the grand chapter of Daniel—"Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords." But, above all, I felt this effect produced in the two opening lines of "Macbeth":—

> "WHEN" (but watch that an emphasis of thunder dwells upon that word "when")—
>
> "WHEN shall we three meet again—
> In thunder, lightning, or in rain?"

What an orchestral crash bursts upon the ear in that all-shattering question. And one syllable of apologetic preparation, so as to meet the suggestion of Horace, would have the effect of emasculating the whole tremendous alarum. The passage in Phædrus differs thus far from that in "Macbeth," that the first line, simply stating a matter of fact, with no more of sentiment than belongs to the word *ingentem*, and to the antithesis between the two parties so enormously divided —Æsop the slave and the Athenians—must be read as an

apoggiatura, or hurried note of introduction, flying forward as if on wings to descend with the fury and weight of a thousand orchestras upon the immortal passion of the second line — "Servumque collocârunt ETERNA IN BASI." This passage from Phædrus, which might be briefly designated *The Apotheosis of the Slave*, gave to me my first grand and jubilant sense of the moral sublime.

Two other experiences of mine of the same class had been earlier, and these I had shared with my sister Elizabeth. The first was derived from the "Arabian Nights." Mrs. Barbauld, a lady now very nearly forgotten,[1] then filled a large space in the public eye ; in fact, as a writer for children, she occupied the place from about 1780 to 1805 which, from 1805 to 1835, was occupied by Miss Edgeworth. Only, as unhappily Miss Edgeworth is also now very nearly forgotten, this is to explain *ignotum per ignotius*, or at least one *ignotum* by another *ignotum*. However, since it cannot be helped, this unknown and also most well-known woman, having occasion, in the days of her glory, to speak of the "Arabian Nights," insisted on Aladdin, and secondly on Sinbad, as the two jewels of the collection. Now, on the contrary, my sister and myself pronounced Sinbad to be very bad, and Aladdin to be pretty nearly the worst, and upon grounds

[1] "*Very nearly forgotten*" : — Not quite, however. It must be hard upon eighty or eighty-five years since she first commenced authorship—a period which allows time for a great deal of forgetting : and yet, in the very week when I am revising this passage, I observe advertised a new edition, attractively illustrated, of the "Evenings at Home"—a joint work of Mrs. Barbauld and her brother (the elder Dr. Aikin). Mrs. Barbauld was exceedingly clever. Her mimicry of Dr. Johnson's style was the best of all that exist. Her blank-verse "Washing Day," descriptive of the discomforts attending a mistimed visit to a rustic friend, under the affliction of a family-washing, is picturesquely circumstantiated. And her prose hymns for children have left upon my childish recollection a deep impression of solemn beauty and simplicity. Coleridge, who scattered his sneering compliments very liberally up and down the world, used to call the elder Dr. Aikin (allusively to Pope's well-known line—

"No craving void left aching in the breast")

an aching void ; and the nephew, Dr. Arthur Aikin, by way of variety, *a void aching*. Whilst Mrs. Barbauld he designated as *that pleonasm of nakedness ;* since, as if it were not enough to be *bare*, she was also *bald*.

that still strike me as just. For, as to Sinbad, it is not a story at all, but a mere succession of adventures, having no unity of interest whatsoever: and in Aladdin, after the possession of the lamp has been once secured by a pure accident, the story ceases to move. All the rest is a mere record of upholstery; how this saloon was finished to-day, and that window on the next day, with no fresh incident whatever, except the single and transient misfortune arising out of the advantage given to the magician by the unpardonable stupidity of Aladdin in regard to the lamp. But, whilst my sister and I agreed in despising Aladdin so much as almost to be on the verge of despising the queen of all the blue-stockings for so ill-directed a preference, one solitary section there was of that tale which fixed and fascinated my gaze, in a degree that I never afterwards forgot, and did not at that time comprehend. The sublimity which it involved was mysterious and unfathomable, as regarded any key which I possessed for deciphering its law or origin. Made restless by the blind sense which I had of its grandeur, I could not for a moment succeed in finding out *why* it should be grand. Unable to explain my own impressions in Aladdin, I did not the less obstinately persist in believing a sublimity which I could not understand. It was, in fact, one of those many important cases which elsewhere I have called *involutes* of human sensibility; combinations in which the materials of future thought or feeling are carried as imperceptibly into the mind as vegetable seeds are carried variously combined through the atmosphere, or by means of rivers, by birds, by winds, by waters, into remote countries. But the reader shall judge for himself. At the opening of the tale, a magician living in the central depths of Africa is introduced to us as one made aware by his secret art of an enchanted lamp endowed with supernatural powers available for the service of any man whatever who should get it into his keeping. But *there* lies the difficulty. The lamp is imprisoned in subterraneous chambers, and from these it can be released only by the hands of an innocent child. But this is not enough: the child must have a special horoscope written in the stars, or else a peculiar destiny written in his constitution, entitling him to take possession of the lamp. Where shall

such a child be found? Where shall he be sought? The magician knows: he applies his ear to the earth; he listens to the innumerable sounds of footsteps that at the moment of his experiment are tormenting the surface of the globe; and amongst them all, at a distance of six thousand miles, playing in the streets of Bagdad, he distinguishes the peculiar steps of the child Aladdin. Through this mighty labyrinth of sounds, which Archimedes, aided by his *arenarius*, could not sum or disentangle, one solitary infant's feet are distinctly recognised on the banks of the Tigris, distant by four hundred and forty days' march of an army or a caravan. These feet, these steps, the sorcerer knows, and challenges in his heart, as the feet, as the steps of that innocent boy, through whose hands only he could have a chance of reaching the lamp.

It follows, therefore, that the wicked magician exercises two demoniac gifts. First, he has the power to disarm Babel itself of its confusion. Secondly, after having laid aside as useless many billions of earthly sounds, and after having fastened his murderous [1] attention upon one insulated tread, he has the power, still more unsearchable, of reading in that hasty movement an alphabet of new and infinite symbols; for, in order that the sound of the child's feet should be significant and intelligible, that sound must open into a gamut of infinite compass. The pulses of the heart, the motions of the will, the phantoms of the brain, must repeat themselves in secret hieroglyphics uttered by the flying footsteps. Even the articulate or brutal sounds of the globe must be all so many languages and ciphers that somewhere have their corresponding keys—have their own grammar and syntax; and thus the least things in the universe must be secret mirrors to the greatest. Palmistry has something of the same dark sublimity. All this, by rude efforts at explanation that mocked my feeble command of words, I communicated to my sister; and she, whose sympathy with my meaning was always so quick and true, often outrunning electrically my imperfect expressions, felt the passage in the same way as myself,[2] but not, perhaps, in the same degree.

[1] "*Murderous*"; for it was his intention to leave Aladdin immured in the subterraneous chambers.

[2] The reader will not understand me as attributing to the Arabian

She was much beyond me in velocity of apprehension, and many other qualities of intellect. Here only, viz., on cases of the *dark* sublime, where it rested upon dim abstractions, and when no particular trait of *moral* grandeur came forward, we differed—differed, that is to say, as by more or by less. Else, even as to the sublime, and numbers of other intellectual questions which rose up to us from our immense reading, we drew together with a perfect fidelity of sympathy ; and therefore I pass willingly from a case which exemplified one of our rare differences, to another, not less interesting for itself, which illustrated (what occurred so continually) the intensity of our agreement.

No instance of noble revenge that ever I heard of seems so effective, if considered as applied to a noble-minded wrongdoer, or in any case as so pathetic. From what quarter the story comes originally, was unknown to us at the time ; and I have never met it since ; so that possibly it may be new to the reader. We found it in a book written for the use of his own children by Dr. Percival, the physician who attended at Greenhay. Dr. P. was a literary man, of elegant tastes and philosophic habits. Some of his papers may be found in the "Manchester Philosophic Transactions" ; and these I have heard mentioned with respect, though, for myself, I have no personal knowledge of them. Some presumption meantime arises in their favour, from the fact that he had been a favoured correspondent of the most eminent Frenchmen at that time who cultivated literature jointly with philosophy. Voltaire, Diderot, Maupertuis, Condorcet, and D'Alembert, had all treated him with distinction ; and I have heard my mother say that, in days before I or my sister could have known him, he attempted vainly to interest her in these French luminaries, by reading extracts from their frequent letters ; which, however, so far from reconciling her to the letters, or to the writers of the letters, had the unhappy

originator of Aladdin all the sentiment of the case as I have endeavoured to disentangle it. He spoke what he did not understand ; for, as to sentiment of any kind, all Orientals are obtuse and impassive. There are other sublimities (some, at least) in the "Arabian Nights," which first became such—a gas that first kindles—when entering into combination with new elements in a Christian atmosphere.

effect of riveting her dislike (previously budding) to the doctor, as their receiver, and the *proneur* of their authors. The tone of the letters—hollow, insincere, and full of courtly civilities to Dr. P., as a known friend of "*the tolerance*" (meaning, of toleration)—certainly was not adapted to the English taste ; and in this respect was specially offensive to my mother, as always assuming of the doctor that, by mere necessity, as being a philosopher, he must be an infidel. Dr. P. left that question, I believe, "*in medio*," neither assenting nor denying ; and undoubtedly there was no particular call upon him to publish his Confession of Faith before one who, in the midst of her rigorous politeness, suffered it to be too transparent that she did not like him. It is always a pity to see anything lost and wasted, especially love; and, therefore, it was no subject for lamentation, that too probably the philosophic doctor did not enthusiastically like *her*. But, if really so, that made no difference in his feelings towards my sister and myself. Us he *did* like ; and, as one proof of his regard, he presented us jointly with such of his works as could be supposed interesting to two young literati, whose combined ages made no more at this period than a baker's dozen. These presentation copies amounted to two at the least, both *octavos*, and one of them entitled *The Father's*— something or other ; what was it ?—*Assistant*, perhaps. How much assistance the doctor might furnish to the fathers upon this wicked little planet I cannot say. But fathers are a stubborn race ; it is very little use trying to assist *them*. Better always to prescribe for the rising generation. And certainly the impression which he made upon us—my sister and myself — by the story in question, was deep and memorable : my sister wept over it, and wept over the remembrance of it ; and, not long after, carried its sweet aroma off with her to heaven ; whilst I, for *my* part, have never forgotten it. Yet, perhaps, it is injudicious to have too much excited the reader's expectations ; therefore, reader, understand what it is that you are invited to hear—not much of a story, but simply a noble sentiment, such as that of Louis XII when he refused, as King of France, to avenge his own injuries as Duke of Orleans—such as that of Hadrian, when he said that a Roman Imperator ought to die standing,

meaning that Cæsar, as the man who represented almighty Rome, should face the last enemy, as the first, in an attitude of unconquerable defiance. Here is Dr. Percival's story, which (again I warn you) will collapse into nothing at all, unless you yourself are able to dilate it by expansive sympathy with its sentiment.

A young officer (in what army, no matter) had so far forgotten himself, in a moment of irritation, as to strike a private soldier, full of personal dignity (as sometimes happens in all ranks), and distinguished for his courage. The inexorable laws of military discipline forbade to the injured soldier any practical redress—he could look for no retaliation by acts. Words only were at his command; and, in a tumult of indignation, as he turned away, the soldier said to his officer that he would "make him repent it." This, wearing the shape of a menace, naturally rekindled the officer's anger, and intercepted any disposition which might be rising within him towards a sentiment of remorse; and thus the irritation between the two young men grew hotter than before. Some weeks after this a partial action took place with the enemy. Suppose yourself a spectator, and looking down into a valley occupied by the two armies. They are facing each other, you see, in martial array. But it is no more than a skirmish which is going on; in the course of which, however, an occasion suddenly arises for a desperate service. A redoubt, which has fallen into the enemy's hands, must be recaptured at any price, and under circumstances of all but hopeless difficulty. A strong party has volunteered for the service; there is a cry for somebody to head them; you see a soldier step out from the ranks to assume this dangerous leadership; the party moves rapidly forward; in a few minutes it is swallowed up from your eyes in clouds of smoke; for one half-hour, from behind these clouds, you receive hieroglyphic reports of bloody strife—fierce repeating signals, flashes from the guns, rolling musketry, and exulting hurrahs, advancing or receding, slackening or redoubling. At length all is over: the redoubt has been recovered; that which was lost is found again; the jewel which had been made captive is ransomed with blood. Crimsoned with glorious gore, the wreck of the conquering party is relieved, and at liberty to return. From

the river you see it ascending. The plume-crested officer in command rushes forward, with his left hand raising his hat in homage to the blackened fragments of what once was a flag, whilst, with his right hand, he seizes that of the leader, though no more than a private from the ranks. *That* perplexes you not: mystery you see none in *that.* For distinctions of order perish, ranks are confounded, "high and low" are words without a meaning, and to wreck goes every notion or feeling that divides the noble from the noble, or the brave man from the brave. But wherefore is it that now, when suddenly they wheel into mutual recognition, suddenly they pause? This soldier, this officer—who are they? O reader! once before they had stood face to face—the soldier it is that was struck; the officer it is that struck him. Once again they are meeting; and the gaze of armies is upon them. If for a moment a doubt divides them, in a moment the doubt has perished. One glance exchanged between them publishes the forgiveness that is sealed for ever. As one who recovers a brother whom he had accounted dead, the officer sprang forward, threw his arms around the neck of the soldier, and kissed him, as if he were some martyr glorified by that shadow of death from which he was returning; whilst, on *his* part, the soldier, stepping back, and carrying his open hand through the beautiful motions of the military salute to a superior, makes this immortal answer—that answer which shut up for ever the memory of the indignity offered to him, even whilst for the last time alluding to it:—"Sir," he said, "I told you before that I would *make you repent it.*"

CHAPTER V

THE FEMALE INFIDEL[1]

At the time of my father's death, I was nearly seven years old.[2] In the next four years, during which we continued to live at Greenhay, nothing memorable occurred, except, indeed, that troubled parenthesis in my life which connected me with my brother William—this certainly was memorable to myself—and, secondly, the visit of a most eccentric young woman, who, about nine years later, drew the eyes of all England upon herself, by her unprincipled conduct in an affair affecting the life of two Oxonian undergraduates. She was the daughter of Lord le Despencer (known previously as Sir Francis Dashwood)[3]; and at this time (meaning the time of her visit to Greenhay) she was about twenty-two years old[4]; with a face and a figure classically beautiful, and with the reputation of extraordinary accomplishments; these accomplishments being not only eminent in their degree, but rare and interesting in their kind. In particular, she astonished every

[1] De Quincey now returns to the use of the main series of his autobiographical papers in *Tait's Magazine* (see *ante*, p. 2); and this chapter is an expansion of what had formed but a page or two in the first of those articles, *i.e.* the article in *Tait* for Feb. 1834.—M.

[2] "Nearly eight years old" would have been more correct. De Quincey was born 15th August 1785; and his father died 18th July 1793. See footnotes, *ante*, p. 30 and p. 34.—M.

[3] Chancellor of the Exchequer in the brief Bute administration of 1762-63, but better known as the founder and one of the chief members of the notorious *Medmenham Club* (alias *Hell Fire Club*), which included also Wilkes and the poets Churchill and Whitehead.—M.

[4] She was born in 1774.—M.

person by her *impromptu* performances on the organ, and by her powers of disputation. These last she applied entirely to attacks upon Christianity; for she openly professed infidelity in the most audacious form; and at my mother's table she certainly proved more than a match for all the clergymen of the neighbouring towns, some of whom (as the most intellectual persons of that neighbourhood) were daily invited to meet her. It was a mere accident which had introduced her to my mother's house. Happening to hear from my sister Mary's governess [1] that she and her pupil were

[1] "*My sister Mary's governess*":—This governess was a Miss Wesley, niece to John Wesley, the founder of Methodism. And the mention of *her* recalls to me a fact, which was recently revived and mis-stated by the whole newspaper press of the island. It had been always known that some relationship existed between the Wellesleys and John Wesley. Their names had, in fact, been originally the same; and the Duke of Wellington himself, in the earlier part of his career, when sitting in the Irish House of Commons, was always known to the Irish journals as Captain Wesley. Upon this arose a natural belief, that the aristocratic branch of the house had improved the name into Wellesley. But the true process of change had been precisely the other way. Not Wesley had been expanded into Wellesley—but, inversely, Wellesley had been contracted by household usage into Wesley. The name must have been *Wellesley* in its earliest stage, since it was founded upon a connection with Wells Cathedral. It had obeyed the same process as prevails in many hundreds of other names: St. Leger, for instance, is always pronounced as if written Sillinger; Cholmondeley as Chumleigh; Marjoribanks as Marchbanks; and the illustrious name of Cavendish was for centuries familiarly pronounced Candish; and Wordsworth has even introduced this name into verse, so as to compel the reader, by a metrical coercion, into calling it Candish. Miss Wesley's family had great musical sensibility and skill. This led the family into giving musical parties, at which was constantly to be found Lord Mornington, the father of the Duke of Wellington. For these parties it was, as Miss Wesley informed me, that the earl composed his most celebrated glee. Here also it was, or in similar musical circles gathered about himself by the first Lord Mornington, that the Duke of Wellington had formed and cultivated his unaffected love for music of the highest class—*i.e.*, for the impassioned music of the serious opera. And it occurs to me as highly probable, that Mrs. Lee's connection with the Wesleys, through which it was that she became acquainted with my mother, must have rested upon the common interest which she and the Wesleys had in the organ and in the class of music suited to that instrument. Mrs. Lee herself was an improvisatrice of the first class upon the organ; and the two brothers of Miss Wesley, Sam. and Charles, ranked for very many years as the first organists in Europe.

going on a visit to an old Catholic family in the County of Durham (the family of Mr. Swinburne, who was known advantageously to the public by his "Travels in Spain and Sicily," &c.), Mrs. Lee, whose education in a French convent, aided by her father's influence, had introduced her extensively to the knowledge of Catholic families in England, and who had herself an invitation to the same house at the same time, wrote to offer the use of her carriage to convey all three—*i.e.*, herself, my sister, and her governess—to Mr. Swinburne's. This naturally drew forth from my mother an invitation to Greenhay; and to Greenhay she came. On the imperial of her carriage, and elsewhere, she described herself as the *Hon.* Antonina Dashwood Lee. But, in fact, being only the illegitimate daughter of Lord le Despencer, she was not entitled to that designation. She had, however, received a bequest even more enviable from her father—viz., not less than forty-five thousand pounds. At a very early age, she had married a young Oxonian, distinguished for nothing but a very splendid person, which had procured him the distinguishing title of *Handsome Lee;* and from him she had speedily separated, on the agreement of dividing the fortune.[1]

My mother little guessed what sort of person it was whom she had asked into her family. So much, however, she had understood from Miss Wesley—that Mrs. Lee was a bold thinker; and that, for a woman, she had an astonishing command of theological learning. This it was that suggested the clerical invitations, as in such a case likely to furnish the most appropriate society. But this led to a painful result. It might easily have happened that a very learned clergyman should not specially have qualified himself for the service of a theological tournament: and my mother's range of acquaintance was not very extensive amongst the clerical body. But of these the two leaders, as regarded public consideration,

[1] Her husband was Matthew Allen Lee, Esq., said to have been of a Scottish family. It was a runaway match in 1794, and they were married at Haddington. As she was then a ward in Chancery, he was arrested and was for some time in confinement on account of the marriage. An arrangement was made in 1796, by which half her property, or about £1200 a year, was settled on herself; and at the end of that year they separated, he taking the other half, and she going to live in Bolton Row, Piccadilly, London.—M.

were Mr. H——, my guardian, and Mr. Clowes, who for more than fifty years officiated as rector of St. John's Church in Manchester. In fact, the *golden* jubilee[1] of his pastoral connection with St. John's was celebrated many years after with much demonstrative expression of public sympathy on the part of universal Manchester—the most important city in the island next after London. No men could have been found who were less fitted to act as champions in a duel on behalf of Christianity. Mr. H—— was dreadfully commonplace; dull, dreadfully dull; and, by the necessity of his nature, incapable of being in deadly interest, which his splendid antagonist at all times was. His encounter, therefore, with Mrs. Lee presented the distressing spectacle of an old, toothless, mumbling mastiff, fighting for the household to which he owed allegiance, against a young leopardess fresh from the forests. Every touch from *her*, every velvety paw, drew blood. And something comic mingled with what my mother felt to be paramount tragedy. Far different was Mr. Clowes: holy, visionary, apostolic, he could not be treated disrespectfully. No man could deny him a qualified homage. But for any polemic service he wanted the taste, the training, and the particular sort of erudition required. Neither would such advantages, if he had happened to possess them, have at all availed him in a case like this. Horror, blank horror, seized him upon seeing a woman, a young woman, a woman of captivating beauty, whom God had adorned so eminently with gifts of person and of mind, breathing sentiments that to him seemed fresh from the mintage of hell. He could have apostrophised her (as long afterwards he himself told me) in the words of Shakspere's Juliet—

"Beautiful tyrant! fiend angelical!"

for he was one of those who never think of Christianity as the subject of defence. Could sunshine, could light, could the glories of the dawn, call for defence? Not as a thing to

[1] "*The golden jubilee*":—This, in Germany, is used popularly as a technical expression: a married couple, when celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of their marriage-day, are said to keep their *golden* jubilee; but on the twenty-fifth anniversary they have credit only for a *silver* jubilee.

be defended, but as a thing to be interpreted, as a thing to be illuminated, did Christianity exist for *him*. He, therefore, was even more unserviceable as a champion against the deliberate impeacher of Christian evidences than my reverend guardian.

Thus it was that he himself explained his own position, in after days, when I had reached my sixteenth year, and visited him upon terms of friendship as close as can ever have existed between a boy and a man already grey-headed. Him and his noiseless parsonage, the pensive abode for sixty years of religious reverie and anchoritish self-denial, I have described further on. In some limited sense he belongs to our literature ; for he was, in fact, the introducer of Swedenborg to this country ; as being himself partially the translator of Swedenborg ; and still more as organising a patronage to other people's translations ; and also, I believe, as republishing the original Latin works of Swedenborg. To say *that* of Mr. Clowes was, until lately, but another way of describing him as a delirious dreamer. At present (1853), I presume the reader to be aware that Cambridge has, within the last few years, unsettled and even revolutionised our estimates of Swedenborg as a philosopher. That man, indeed, whom Emerson ranks as one amongst his inner consistory of intellectual potentates, cannot be the absolute trifler that Kant (who knew him only by the most trivial of his pretensions), eighty years ago, supposed him. Assuredly, Mr. Clowes was no trifler, but lived habitually a life of power, though in a world of religious mysticism and of apocalyptic visions. To him, being such a man by nature and by habit, it was in effect the lofty Lady Geraldine from Coleridge's "Christabelle" that stood before him in this infidel lady. A magnificent witch she was, like the Lady Geraldine ; having the same superb beauty ; the same power of throwing spells over the ordinary gazer ; and yet at intervals unmasking to some solitary, unfascinated spectator the same dull blink of a snaky eye ; and revealing, through the most fugitive of gleams, a traitress couchant beneath what else to all others seemed the form of a lady, armed with incomparable pretensions—one that was

> "Beautiful exceedingly,
> Like a lady from a far countrie."

The scene, as I heard it sketched long years afterwards by more than one of those who had witnessed it, was painful in excess. And the shock given to my mother was memorable. For the first and the last time in her long and healthy life, she suffered an alarming nervous attack. Partly this arose from the conflict between herself in the character of hostess, and herself as a loyal daughter of Christian faith ; she shuddered, in a degree almost incontrollable and beyond her power to dissemble, at the unfeminine intrepidity with which "the leopardess" conducted her assaults upon the sheep-folds of orthodoxy ; and, partly also, this internal conflict arose from concern on behalf of her own servants, who waited at dinner, and were inevitably liable to impressions from what they heard. My mother, by original choice, and by early training under a very aristocratic father, recoiled as austerely from all direct communication with her servants as the Pythia at Delphi from the attendants that swept out the temple. But not the less her conscience, in all stages of her life, having or *not* having any special knowledge of religion, acknowledged a pathetic weight of obligation to remove from her household all confessedly corrupting influences. And here was one which she could not remove. What chiefly she feared, on behalf of her servants, was either, first, the danger from the simple *fact*, now suddenly made known to them, that it was possible for a person unusually gifted to deny Christianity : such a denial and haughty abjuration could not but carry itself more profoundly into the reflective mind, even of servants, when the arrow came winged and made buoyant by the gay feathering of so many splendid accomplishments. This general fact was appreciable by those who would forget, and never could have understood, the particular arguments of the infidel. Yet, even as regarded these particular arguments, secondly, my mother feared that some one—brief, telling, and rememberable—might be singled out from the rest, might transplant itself to the servants' hall, and take root for life in some mind sufficiently thoughtful to invest it with interest, and yet far removed from any opportunities, through books or society, for disarming the argument of its sting. Such a danger was quickened by the character and pretensions of Mrs. Lee's footman, who was a daily witness,

whilst standing behind his mistress's chair at dinner, to the confusion which she carried into the hostile camp, and might be supposed to renew such discussions in the servants' hall with singular advantages for a favourable attention. For he was a showy and most audacious Londoner, and what is *technically* known, in the language of servants' hiring-offices, as "a man of figure." He might, therefore, be considered as one dangerously armed for shaking religious principles, especially amongst the female servants. Here, however, I believe that my mother was mistaken. Women of humble station less than any other class have any tendency to sympathise with boldness that manifests itself in throwing off the yoke of religion. Perhaps a natural instinct tells them that levity of that nature will pretty surely extend itself contagiously to other modes of conscientious obligation; at any rate, my own experience would warrant me in doubting whether any instance were ever known of a woman, in the rank of servant, regarding infidelity or irreligion as something brilliant, or interesting, or in any way as favourably distinguishing a man. Meantime, this conscientious apprehension on account of the servants applied to contingencies that were remote. But the pity on account of the poor lady herself applied to a danger that seemed imminent and deadly. This beautiful and splendid young creature, as my mother knew, was floating, without anchor, or knowledge of any anchoring grounds, upon the unfathomable ocean of a London world, which, for *her*, was wrapped in darkness as regarded its dangers, and thus for *her* the chances of shipwreck were seven times multiplied. It was notorious that Mrs. Lee had no protector or guide, natural or legal. Her marriage had, in fact, instead of imposing new restraints, released her from old ones. For the legal separation of Doctors' Commons, technically called a divorce, but a divorce simply *à mensâ et thoro* (from bed and board), and not *à vinculo matrimonii* (from the very tie and obligation of marriage), had removed her by law from the control of her husband; whilst, at the same time, the matrimonial condition, of course, enlarged that liberty of action which else is unavoidably narrowed by the reserve and delicacy natural to a young woman whilst yet unmarried. Here arose one peril more; and, secondly, arose

this most unusual aggravation of that peril—that Mrs. Lee was deplorably ignorant of English life; indeed, of life universally. Strictly speaking, she was even yet a raw untutored novice turned suddenly loose from the twilight of a monastic seclusion. Under any circumstances, such a situation lay open to an amount of danger that was afflicting to contemplate. But one dreadful exasperation of these fatal auguries lay in the peculiar *temper* of Mrs. Lee, as connected with her infidel thinking. Her nature was too frank and bold to tolerate any disguise: and my mother's own experience had now taught her that Mrs. Lee would not be content to leave to the random call of accident the avowal of her principles. No passive or latent spirit of free-thinking was hers—headlong it was, uncompromising, almost fierce, and regarding no restraints of place or season. Like Shelley, some few years later, whose day she would have gloried to welcome, she looked upon her principles, not only as conferring rights, but also as imposing duties of active proselytism. From this feature in her character it was that my mother foresaw an *instant* evil, which she urged Miss Wesley to press earnestly on her attention—viz., the inevitable alienation of all her female friends. In many parts of the Continent (but too much we are all in the habit of calling by the wide name of "the Continent" France, Germany, Switzerland, and Belgium), my mother was aware that the most flagrant proclamation of infidelity would not stand in the way of a woman's favourable reception into society. But in England at that time this was far otherwise. A display such as Mrs. Lee habitually forced upon people's attention would at once have the effect of banishing from her house all women of respectability. She would be thrown upon the society of *men*—bold and reckless, such as either agreed with herself, or, being careless on the whole subject of religion, pretended to do so. Her income, though diminished now by the partition with Mr. Lee, was still above a thousand per annum; which, though trivial for any purpose of display in a place so costly as London, was still important enough to gather round her unprincipled adventurers, some of whom might be noble enough to obey no attraction but that which lay in her marble beauty, in her Athenian grace and eloquence, and the

wild impassioned nature of her accomplishments; by her acting, her dancing, her conversation, her musical improvisations, she was qualified to attract the most intellectual men; but baser attractions would exist for baser men; and my mother urged Miss Wesley, as one whom Mrs. Lee admitted to her confidence, above all things to act upon her pride by forewarning her that such men, in the midst of lip homage to her charms, would be sure to betray its hollowness by declining to let their wives and daughters visit her. Plead what excuses they would, Mrs. Lee might rely upon it, that the true ground for this insulting absence of female visitors would be found to lie in her profession of infidelity. This alienation of female society would, it was clear, be precipitated enormously by Mrs. Lee's frankness. A result that might, by a dissembling policy, have been delayed indefinitely would now be hurried forward to an immediate crisis. And in this result went to wreck the very best part of Mrs. Lee's securities against ruin.

It is scarcely necessary to say that all the evil followed which had been predicted, and through the channels which had been predicted. Some time was required on so vast a stage as London to publish the fact of Mrs. Lee's free-thinking; that is, to publish it as a matter of systematic purpose. Many persons had at first made a liberal allowance for her, as tempted by some momentary impulse into opinions that she had not sufficiently considered, and might forget as hastily as she had adopted them. But no sooner was it made known as a settled fact that she had deliberately dedicated her energies to the interests of an antichristian system, and that she hated Christianity, than the whole body of her friends within the pale of social respectability fell away from her, and forsook her house. To *them* succeeded a clique of male visitors, some of whom were doubtfully respectable, and others (like Mr. Frend, memorable for his expulsion from Cambridge on account of his public hostility to Trinitarianism) were distinguished by a tone of intemperate defiance to the spirit of English society. Thrown upon such a circle, and emancipated from all that temper of reserve which would have been impressed upon her by habitual anxiety for the good opinion of virtuous and high-principled women, the

poor lady was tempted into an elopement with two dissolute brothers ; for what ultimate purpose on either side was never made clear to the public. Why a lady should elope from her own house, and the protection of her own servants, under whatever impulse, seemed generally unintelligible. But apparently it was precisely this protection from her own servants which presented itself to the brothers in the light of an obstacle to their objects. What these objects might ultimately be, I do not *entirely* know ; and I do not feel myself authorised, by anything which of my own knowledge I know, to load either of them with mercenary imputations. One of them (the younger) was, or fancied himself, in love with Mrs. Lee. It was impossible for him to marry her ; and possibly he may have fancied that in some rustic retirement, where the parties were unknown, it would be easier than in London to appease the lady's scruples in respect to the sole mode of connection which the law left open to them. The frailty of the will in Mrs. Lee was as manifest in this stage of the case as subsequently, when she allowed herself to be overclamoured by Mr. Lee and his friends into a capital prosecution of the brothers. After she had once allowed herself to be put into a post-chaise, she was persuaded to believe (and such was her ignorance of English society that possibly she *did* believe) herself through the rest of the journey liable at any moment to summary coercion in the case of attempting any resistance. The brothers and herself left London in the evening. Consequently, it was long after midnight when the party halted at a town in Gloucestershire, two stages beyond Oxford.[1] The younger gentleman then persuaded her, but (as she alleged) under the impression on her part that resistance was unavailing, and that the injury to her reputation was by this time irreparable, to allow of his coming to her

[1] The elopement or abduction was on Sunday, 15th January 1804. The two brothers had been dining with her that day in her house in Bolton Row, Piccadilly ; and, after much urging of the younger brother's suit,—the elder brother, however, the more vehement in urging it,—they had succeeded in getting her into a post-chaise and driving off with her. They took the Uxbridge road, and halted at Tetsworth, about twelve miles from Oxford, between one and two o'clock in the morning. There had been no special outcry or disturbance on the way.—M.

bedroom. This was perhaps not entirely a fraudulent representation in Mrs. Lee. The whole circumstances of the case made it clear that, with any decided opening for deliverance, she would have caught at it; and probably would again, from wavering of mind, have dallied with the danger.

Perhaps at this point, having already in this last paragraph shot ahead by some nine years of the period when she visited Greenhay, allowing myself this license in order to connect my mother's warning through Miss Wesley with the practical sequel of the case, it may be as well for me to pursue the arrears of the story down to its final incident. In 1804, at the Lent Assizes for the County of Oxford, she appeared as principal witness against two brothers, L——t G——n, and L——n G——n,[1] on a capital charge of having forcibly carried her off from her own house in London, and afterwards of having, at some place in Gloucestershire, by collusion with each other and by terror, enabled one of the brothers to offer the last violence to her person. The circumstantial accounts published at the time by the newspapers were of a nature to conciliate the public sympathy altogether to the prisoners; and the general belief accorded with what was, no doubt, the truth—that the lady had been driven into a false accusation by the overpowering remonstrances of her friends, joined, in this instance, by her husband, all of whom were willing to believe, or willing to have it believed by the public, that advantage had been taken of her little acquaintance with English usages. I was

[1] No need for the blanks now. The brothers were the Rev. Lockhart Gordon and Mr. Louden Gordon, sons of a deceased Hon. Lockhart Gordon, who was a scion of the Scottish house of Aboyne, and had been Judge Advocate-General of Bengal. The two brothers, the elder twenty-eight years of age at the time of the trial, and the younger twenty-four, had known Miss Dashwood in her girlhood when she boarded with their mother in Kensington, and had renewed acquaintance with her in 1803, when the elder, now a clergyman, separated from his wife, was residing in Alsop's Buildings, New Road, and the younger, just returned from some stay in the West Indies, was living with him. The circumstances of Miss Dashwood, and the amount of her means, were well known to both; and, as both were in straits for money,—the younger more particularly,—there was perhaps a motive for the kind of alliance with her which was sought.—M.

present at the trial. The court was opened at eight o'clock in the morning; and such was the interest in the case, that a mob, composed chiefly of gownsmen, besieged the doors for some time before the moment of admission. On this occasion, by the way, I witnessed a remarkable illustration of the profound obedience which Englishmen, under all circumstances, pay to the law. The constables, for what reason I do not know, were very numerous, and very violent. Such of us as happened to have gone in our academic dress had our caps smashed in two by the constables' staves; *why*, it might be difficult for the officers to say, as none of us were making any tumult, nor had any motive for doing so, unless by way of retaliation. Many of these constables were bargemen or petty tradesmen, who in their ex-official character had often been engaged in rows with undergraduates, and usually had had the worst of it. At present, in the service of the blindfold goddess, these equitable men were no doubt taking out their vengeance for past favours. But, under all this wanton display of violence, the gownsmen practised the severest forbearance. The pressure from behind made it impossible to forbear pressing ahead; crushed, you were obliged to crush; but, beyond that, there was no movement or gesture on our part to give any colourable warrant to the brutality of the officers. For nearly a whole hour, I saw this expression of reverence to the law triumphant over all provocations. It may be presumed that, to prompt so much crowding, there must have been some commensurate interest. There was so, but that interest was not at all in Mrs. Lee. She was entirely unknown; and even by reputation or rumour, from so vast a wilderness as London, neither her beauty nor her intellectual pretensions had travelled down to Oxford. Possibly, in each section of 300 men, there might be one individual whom accident had brought acquainted, as it had myself, with her extraordinary endowments. But the general and academic interest belonged exclusively to the accused. They were both Oxonians, one belonging to University College, and the other, perhaps, to Balliol: and, as they had severally taken the degree of A.B., which implies a residence of *at least* three years, they were pretty extensively known. But, known or not known

personally, in virtue of the *esprit de corps*, the accused parties would have benefited in any case by a general brotherly interest. Over and above which, there was in this case the interest attached to an almost unintelligible accusation. A charge of personal violence, under the roof of a respectable English posting-house, occupied always by a responsible master and mistress, and within call at every moment of numerous servants—what could that mean? And again, when it became understood that this violence was alleged to have realised itself under a delusion, under a pre-occupation of the victim's mind, that resistance to it was hopeless, how, and under what profound ignorance of English society, had such a pre-occupation been possible? To the accused, and to the incomprehensible accusation, therefore, belonged the whole weight of the interest; and it was a very secondary interest, indeed, and purely as a reflex interest from the main one, which awaited the prosecutress. And yet, though so little curiosity "awaited" her, it happened of necessity that, within a few moments after her first coming forward in the witness-box, she had created a separate one for herself—first, through her impressive appearance; secondly, through the appalling coolness of her answers. The trial began, I think, about nine o'clock in the morning; and, as some time was spent on the examination of Mrs. Lee's servants, of postilions, ostlers, &c., in pursuing the traces of the affair from London to a place seventy miles north of London, it was probably about eleven in the forenoon before the prosecutress was summoned. My heart throbbed a little as the court lulled suddenly into the deep stillness of expectation, when that summons was heard:—"Rachael Frances Antonina Dashwood Lee" resounded through all the passages; and immediately, in an adjoining anteroom, through which she was led by her attorney, for the purpose of evading the mob that surrounded the public approaches, we heard her advancing steps. Pitiable was the humiliation expressed by her carriage as she entered the witness-box. Pitiable was the change, the world of distance between this faltering and dejected accuser, and that wild leopardess that had once worked her pleasure amongst the sheepfolds of Christianity, and had cuffed my poor guardian so unrelentingly, right and left,

front and rear, when he attempted the feeblest of defences. However, she was not long exposed to the searching gaze of the court, and the trying embarrassments of her situation. A single question brought the whole investigation to a close. Mrs. Lee had been sworn. After a few questions, she was suddenly asked by the counsel for the defence whether she believed in the Christian religion? Her answer was brief and peremptory, without distinction or circumlocution—*No.* Or, perhaps, not in God? Again she replied, *No;* and again her answer was prompt and *sans phrase.* Upon this the judge declared that he could not permit the trial to proceed. The jury had heard what the witness said: she only could give evidence upon the capital part of the charge; and she had openly incapacitated herself before the whole court. The jury instantly acquitted the prisoners.[1] In the course of the day I left my name at Mrs. Lee's lodgings; but her servant assured me that she was too much agitated to see anybody till the evening. At the hour assigned I called again. It was dusk, and a mob had assembled. At the moment I came up to the door, a lady was issuing, muffled up, and in some measure disguised. It was Mrs. Lee. At the corner of an adjacent street a post-chaise was drawn up. Towards this, under the protection of the attorney who had managed her case, she made her way as eagerly as possible. Before she could reach it, however, she was detected; a savage howl was raised; and a rush made to seize her. Fortunately, a body of gownsmen formed round her, so as to secure her from personal assault; they put her rapidly into the carriage; and then, joining the mob in their hootings, sent off the horses at a gallop. Such was the mode of her exit from Oxford.

Subsequently to this painful collision with Mrs. Lee at

[1] De Quincey's account of the trial corresponds closely with the extant reports elsewhere, save that it perhaps intensifies somewhat the terms of Mrs. Lee's declaration of her unbelief. At this point of her cross-examination, however, the case was certainly stopped—Mr. Justice Laurence instructing the jury to find for the defenders, and at the same time intimating that there had been no sufficient evidence of resistance on Mrs. Lee's part. The clerical brother accordingly left the bar, after a severe lecture from the judge; but the younger was detained on an action for debt.—M.

the Oxford Assizes, I heard nothing of her for many years, excepting only this—that she was residing in the family of an English clergyman distinguished for his learning and piety. This account gave great pleasure to my mother—not only as implying some chance that Mrs. Lee might be finally reclaimed from her unhappy opinions, but also as a proof that, in submitting to a rustication so mortifying to a woman of her brilliant qualifications, she must have fallen under some influences more promising for her respectability and happiness than those which had surrounded her in London. Finally, we saw by the public journals that she had written and published a book. The title I forget; but by its subject it was connected with political or social philosophy.[1] And one eminent testimony to its merit I myself am able to allege—viz., Wordsworth's. Singular enough it seems, that he who read so very little of modern literature, in fact, next to nothing, should be the sole critic and reporter whom I have happened to meet upon Mrs. Lee's work. But so it was: accident had thrown the book in his way during one of his annual visits to London, and a second time at Lowther Castle. He paid to Mrs. Lee a compliment which certainly he paid to no other of her contemporaries—viz., that of reading her book very nearly to the end; and he spoke of it repeatedly as distinguished for vigour and originality of thought.

[1] A book called *Memoirs of R. F. A. Dashwood Lee* was published in London, without date, and was afterwards suppressed. But it may be to another book of hers that De Quincey refers here.—M.

CHAPTER VI

I AM INTRODUCED TO THE WARFARE OF A PUBLIC SCHOOL[1]

FOUR years after my father's death, it began to be perceived that there was no purpose to be answered in any longer keeping up the costly establishment of Greenhay. A head-gardener, besides labourers equal to at least two more, were required for the grounds and gardens. And no motive existed any longer for being near to a great trading town, so long after the commercial connection with it had ceased. Bath seemed, on all accounts, the natural station for a person in my mother's situation ; and thither, accordingly, she went. I, who had been placed under the tuition of one of my guardians, remained some time longer under his care. I was then transferred to Bath. During this interval the sale of the house and grounds took place. It may illustrate the subject of *guardianship*, and the ordinary execution of its duties, to mention the result. The year was in itself a year of great depression, and every way unfavourable to such a transaction ; and the particular night for which the sale had been fixed turned out remarkably wet ; yet no attempt was made to postpone it, and it proceeded. Originally the house and grounds had cost about £6000. I have heard that only one offer was made—viz., of £2500. Be that as it may, for the sum of £2500 it was sold ; and I have been often assured that, by waiting a few years, four to six times that sum might have been obtained with ease. This is not im-

[1] This chapter, like the last, is an expansion of a portion of the autobiographical paper in *Tait's Magazine* for February 1834.—M.

probable, as the house was then out in the country; but since then the town of Manchester has gathered round it and enveloped it. Meantime, my guardians were all men of honour and integrity; but their hands were filled with their own affairs. One (my tutor) was a clergyman, rector of a church, and having his parish, his large family, and three pupils to attend. He was, besides, a very sedentary and indolent man, loving books—hating business. Another was a merchant. A third was a country magistrate, overladen with official business: him we rarely saw. Finally, the fourth was a banker in a distant county, having more knowledge of the world, more energy, and more practical wisdom, than all the rest united, but too remote for interfering effectually.

Reflecting upon the evils which befell me, and the gross mismanagement, under my guardians, of my small fortune, and that of my brothers and sisters, it has often occurred to me that so important an office, which, from the time of Demosthenes, has been proverbially mal-administered, ought to be put upon a new footing, plainly guarded by a few obvious provisions. As under the Roman laws, for a long period, the guardian should be made responsible in law, and should give security from the first for the due performance of his duties. But, to give him a motive for doing this, of course he must be paid. With the new obligations and liabilities will commence commensurate emoluments. If a child is made a ward in Chancery, its property is managed expensively, but always advantageously. Some great change is imperatively called for: no duty in the whole compass of human life being so scandalously neglected as this.

In my twelfth year it was that first of all I entered upon the arena of a great public school—viz., the Grammar School[1] of Bath, over which at that time presided a most

[1] "*Grammar School*":—By the way, as the grammar-schools of England are amongst her most eminent distinctions, and, with submission to the innumerable wretches (gentlemen, I should say) that hate England "worse than toad or asp," have never been rivalled by any corresponding institutions in other lands, I may as well take this opportunity of explaining the word *grammar*, which most people misapprehend. Men suppose a grammar-school to mean a school where they teach grammar. But this is not the true meaning, and

accomplished Etonian—Mr. (or was he as yet Doctor?) Morgan. If he was not, I am sure he ought to have been; and, with the reader's concurrence, will therefore create him a doctor on the spot. Every man has reason to rejoice who enjoys the advantage of a public training. I condemned, and *do* condemn, the practice of sending out into such stormy exposures those who are as yet too young, too dependent on female gentleness, and endowed with sensibilities originally too exquisite for such a warfare. But at nine or ten the masculine energies of the character are beginning to develop themselves; or, if not, no discipline will better aid in their development than the bracing intercourse of a great English classical school. Even the selfish are *there* forced into accommodating themselves to a public standard of generosity; and the effeminate into conforming to a rule of manliness. I was myself at two public schools, and I think with gratitude of the benefits which I reaped from both; as also I think with gratitude of that guardian in whose quiet household I learned Latin so effectually. But the small private schools, of which I had opportunities for gathering some brief experience—schools containing thirty to forty boys—were models of ignoble manners as regarded part of the

tends to calumniate such schools, by ignoring their highest functions. Limiting by a false limitation the earliest object contemplated by such schools, they obtain a plausible pretext for representing all beyond grammar as something extraneous and casual that did not enter into the original or normal conception of the founders, and that may therefore have been due to alien suggestion. But now, when Suetonius writes a little book bearing this title, "De Illustribus Grammaticis," what does he mean? What is it that he promises? A memoir upon the eminent *grammarians* of Rome? Not at all, but a memoir upon the distinguished *literati* of Rome. *Grammatica* does certainly mean sometimes grammar; but it is also the best Latin word for literature. A *grammaticus* is what the French express by the word *litterateur*. We unfortunately have no corresponding term in English: a *man of letters* is our awkward periphrasis in the singular (too apt, as our jest-books remind us, to suggest the postman); whilst in the plural we resort to the Latin word *literati*. The school which professes to teach *grammatica* professes, therefore, the culture of literature in the widest and most liberal extent, and is opposed *generically* to schools for teaching mechanic arts; and, within its own *sub-genus* of schools dedicated to liberal objects, is opposed to schools for teaching mathematics, or, more widely, to schools for teaching science.

juniors, and of favouritism as regarded the masters. Nowhere is the sublimity of public justice so broadly exemplified as in an English public school on the old Edward the Sixth or Elizabeth foundation. There is not in the universe such an Areopagus for fair play, and abhorrence of all crooked ways, as an English mob, or one of the time-honoured English "foundation" schools. But my own first introduction to such an establishment was under peculiar and contradictory circumstances. When my "rating," or graduation in the school was to be settled, naturally my altitude (to speak astronomically) was taken by my proficiency in Greek. But here I had no advantage over others of my age. My guardian was a feeble Grecian, and had not excited my ambition; so that I could barely construe books as easy as the Greek Testament and the Iliad. This was considered quite well enough for my age; but still it caused me to be placed under the care of Mr. Wilkins, the second master out of four, and not under Dr. Morgan himself. Within one month, however, my talent for Latin verses, which had by this time gathered strength and expansion, became known. Suddenly I was honoured as never was man or boy since Mordecai the Jew. Without any colourable relation to the doctor's jurisdiction, I was now weekly paraded for distinction at the supreme tribunal of the school; out of which, at first, grew nothing but a sunshine of approbation delightful to my heart. Within six weeks all this had changed. The approbation, indeed, continued, and the public expression of it. Neither would there, in the ordinary course, have been any painful reaction from jealousy or fretful resistance to the soundness of my pretensions; since it was sufficiently known to such of my schoolfellows as stood on my own level in the school, that I, who had no male relatives but military men, and those in India, could not have benefited by any clandestine aid. But, unhappily, Dr. Morgan was at that time dissatisfied with some points in the progress of his head class [1]; and, as it soon appeared, was continually throwing in their teeth the brilliancy of my verses at eleven or twelve, by comparison with theirs at

[1] "*Class*" or "*form*":—One knows not how to make one's self intelligible, so different are the terms locally.

seventeen, eighteen, and even nineteen. I had observed him sometimes pointing to myself, and was perplexed at seeing this gesture followed by gloomy looks, and what French reporters call "sensation," in these young men, whom naturally I viewed with awe as my leaders — boys that were called young men, men that were reading Sophocles (a name that carried with it the sound of something seraphic to my ears), and who never had vouchsafed to waste a word on such a child as myself. The day was come, however, when all that would be changed. One of these leaders strode up to me in the public playground ; and, delivering a blow on my shoulder, which was not intended to hurt me, but as a mere formula of introduction, asked me, "What the devil I meant by bolting out of the course, and annoying other people in that manner? Were 'other people' to have no rest for me and my verses, which, after all, were horribly bad?" There might have been some difficulty in returning an answer to this address, but none was required. I was briefly admonished to see that I wrote worse for the future, or else—— At this *aposiopesis* I looked inquiringly at the speaker, and he filled up the chasm by saying, that he would "annihilate" me. Could any person fail to be aghast at such a demand? I was to write worse than my own standard, which, by his account of my verses, must be difficult ; and I was to write worse than himself, which might be impossible. My feelings revolted against so arrogant a demand, unless it had been far otherwise expressed ; if death on the spot had awaited me, I could not have controlled myself; and, on the next occasion for sending up verses to the headmaster, so far from attending to the orders issued, I double-shotted my guns ; double applause descended on myself ; but I remarked, with some awe, though not repenting of what I had done, that double confusion seemed to agitate the ranks of my enemies. Amongst them, loomed out in the distance my "annihilating" friend, who shook his huge fist at me, but with something like a grim smile about his eyes. He took an early opportunity of paying his respects to me again, saying, "You little devil, do you call this writing your worst?"—"No," I replied ; "I call it writing my best." The annihilator, as it turned out, was really a

good-natured young man ; but he was on the wing for Cambridge ; and with the rest, or some of them, I continued to wage war for more than a year. And yet, for a word spoken with kindness, how readily I would have resigned (had it been altogether at my own choice to do so) the peacock's feather in my cap as the merest of baubles. Undoubtedly, praise sounded sweet in *my* ears also ; but that was nothing by comparison with what stood on the other side. I detested distinctions that were connected with mortification to others ; and, even if I could have got over *that*, the eternal feud fretted and tormented my nature. Love, that once in childhood had been so mere a necessity to me, *that* had long been a reflected ray from a departed sunset. But peace, and freedom from strife, if love were no longer possible (as so rarely it is in this world), was the clamorous necessity of my nature. To contend with somebody was still my fate ; how to escape the contention I could not see ; and yet, for itself, and for the deadly passions into which it forced me, I hated and loathed it more than death. It added to the distraction and internal feud of my mind, that I could not *altogether* condemn the upper boys. I was made a handle of humiliation to them. And, in the meantime, if I had an undeniable advantage in one solitary accomplishment, which is still a matter of accident, or sometimes of peculiar direction given to the taste, they, on the other hand, had a great advantage over me in the more elaborate difficulties of Greek, and of choral Greek poetry. I could not altogether wonder at their hatred of myself. Yet still, as they had chosen to adopt this mode of conflict with me, I did not feel that I had any choice but to resist. The contest was terminated for me by my removal from the school, in consequence of a very threatening illness affecting my head ; but it lasted more than a year, and it did not close before several among my public enemies had become my private friends. They were much older, but they invited me to the houses of their friends, and showed me a respect which affected me—this respect having more reference, apparently, to the firmness I had exhibited, than to any splendour in my verses. And, indeed, these had rather drooped, from a natural accident : several persons of my own class had formed the practice of

asking me to write verses for *them*. I could not refuse. But, as the subjects given out were the same for the entire class, it was not possible to take so many crops off the ground, without starving the quality of all.

The most interesting public event which, during my stay at this school, at all connected itself with Bath, and, indeed, with the school itself, was the sudden escape of Sir Sidney Smith from the prison of the Temple in Paris. The mode of his escape was as striking as its time was critical. Having accidentally thrown a ball beyond the prison bounds in playing at tennis, or some such game, Sir Sidney was surprised to observe that the ball thrown back was not the same. Fortunately, he had the presence of mind to dissemble his sudden surprise. He retired, examined the ball, found it stuffed with letters; and, in the same way, he subsequently conducted a long correspondence, and arranged the whole circumstances of his escape; which, remarkably enough, was accomplished exactly eight days before the sailing of Napoleon with the Egyptian expedition; so that Sir Sidney was just in time to confront, and utterly to defeat, Napoleon in the breach of Acre. But for Sir Sidney, Bonaparte would have overrun Syria, *that* is certain. What would have followed from that event is a far more obscure problem.

Sir Sidney Smith, I must explain to readers of this generation, and Sir Edward Pellew (afterwards Lord Exmouth), figured as the two [1] Paladins of the first war with revolutionary France. Rarely were these two names mentioned but in connection with some splendid, prosperous, and unequal contest. Hence the whole nation was saddened by the account of Sir Sidney's capture; and this must be understood, in order to make the joy of his sudden return perfectly intelligible. Not even a rumour of Sir Sidney's escape had or could have run before him; for, at the moment of reaching the coast of England, he had started

[1] To *them* in the next stage of the war succeeded Sir Michael Seymour, and Lord Cochrane (the present earl of Dundonald), and Lord Camelford. The two last were the regular fire-eaters of the day. Sir Horatio Nelson, being already an admiral, was no longer looked to for insulated exploits of brilliant adventure; his name was now connected with larger and combined attacks, less dashing and adventurous, because including heavier responsibilities.

with post-horses to Bath. It was about dusk when he arrived; the postilions were directed to the square in which his mother lived; in a few minutes he was in his mother's arms; and in fifty minutes more the news had flown to the remotest suburb of the city. The agitation of Bath on this occasion was indescribable. All the troops of the line then quartered in that city, and a whole regiment of volunteers, immediately got under arms, and marched to the quarter in which Sir Sidney lived. The small square overflowed with the soldiery; Sir Sidney went out, and was immediately lost to us, who were watching for him, in the closing ranks of the troops. Next morning, however, I, my younger brother, and a schoolfellow of my own age, called formally upon the naval hero. *Why*, I know not, unless as *alumni* of the school at which Sir Sidney Smith had received his own education. We were admitted without question or demur; and I may record it as an amiable trait in Sir Sidney, that he received us then with great kindness, and took us down with him to the pump-room. Considering, however, that we must have been most afflicting bores to Sir Sidney—a fact which no self-esteem could even then disguise from us—it puzzled me at first to understand the principle of his conduct. Having already done more than enough in courteous acknowledgment of our fraternal claims as fellow-students at the Bath Grammar School, why should he think it necessary to burden himself further with our worshipful society? I found out the secret, and will explain it. A very slight attention to Sir Sidney's deportment in public revealed to me that he was morbidly afflicted with nervous sensibility, and with *mauvaise honte*. He that had faced so cheerfully crowds of hostile and threatening eyes, could not support without trepidation those gentle eyes, beaming with gracious admiration, of his fair young countrywomen. By accident, at that moment Sir Sidney had no acquaintances in Bath,[1] a fact which is not at all to be wondered at. Living so much abroad and at sea, an English sailor, of whatever rank, has few opportunities for making friends at home.

[1] Lord Camelford was, I believe, his first cousin; Sir Sidney's mother and Lady Camelford being sisters. But Lord Camelford was then absent from Bath.

And yet there was a necessity that Sir Sidney should gratify the public interest, so warmly expressed, by presenting himself somewhere or other to the public eye. But how trying a service to the most practised and otherwise most callous veteran on such an occasion—that he should step forward, saying in effect—"So you are wanting to see me; well, then, here I am; come and look at me!" Put it into what language you please, such a summons was written on all faces, and countersigned by his worship the mayor, who began to whisper insinuations of riots if Sir Sidney did not comply. Yet, if he *did*, inevitably his own act of obedience to the public pleasure took the shape of an ostentatious self-parading under the construction of those numerous persons who knew nothing of the public importunity, or of Sir Sidney's unaffected and even morbid reluctance to obtrude himself upon the public eye. The thing was unavoidable; and the sole palliation that it admitted was, to break the concentration of the public gaze, by associating Sir Sidney with some alien group, no matter of what cattle. Such a group would relieve both parties—gazer and gazee—from too distressing a consciousness of the little business on which they had met. We, the schoolboys, being three, intercepted and absorbed part of the enemy's fire; and, by furnishing Sir Sidney with real *bona fide* matter of conversation, we released him from the most distressing part of his sufferings—viz., the passive and silent acquiescence in his own apotheosis—holding a lighted candle, as it were, to the glorification of his own shrine. With our help, he weathered the storm of homage silently ascending. And we, in fact, whilst seeming to ourselves too undeniably a triad of bores, turned out the most serviceable allies that Sir Sidney ever had by land or sea, until several moons later, when he formed the invaluable acquaintance of the Syrian "butcher"—viz., Djezzar, the pacha of Acre. I record this little trait of Sir Sidney's constitutional temperament, and the little service through which I and my two comrades contributed materially to his relief, as an illustration of that infirmity which besieges the nervous system of our nation. It is a sensitiveness which sometimes amounts to lunacy, and sometimes even tempts to suicide. It is a mistake, however, to suppose this morbid

affection unknown to Frenchmen, or unknown to men of the world. I have myself known it to exist in both, and particularly in a man that might be said to live in the street, such was the American publicity which circumstances threw around his life; and so far were his habits of life removed from reserve, or from any predisposition to gloom. And at this moment I recall a remarkable illustration of what I am saying, communicated by Wordsworth's accomplished friend, Sir George Beaumont. To *him* I had been sketching the distressing sensitiveness of Sir Sidney pretty much as I have sketched it to the reader; and how he, the man that on the breach at Acre valued not the eye of Jew, Christian, or Turk, shrank back — *me ipso teste* — from the gentle, though eager—from the admiring, yet affectionate—glances of three very young ladies, in Gay Street, Bath, the oldest (I should say) not more than seventeen. Upon which Sir George mentioned, as a parallel experience of his own, that Mr. Canning, being ceremoniously introduced to himself (Sir George), about the time when he had reached the meridian of his fame as an orator, and should therefore have become *blasé* to the extremity of being absolutely seared and case-hardened against all impressions whatever appealing to his vanity or egotism, did absolutely (*credite posteri!*) blush like any roseate girl of fifteen. And that this was no accident growing out of a momentary agitation, no sudden spasmodic pang, anomalous and transitory, appeared from other concurrent anecdotes of Canning, reported by gentlemen from Liverpool, who described to us most graphically and picturesquely the wayward fitfulness (not coquettish or wilful, but nervously overmastering, and most unaffectedly distressing) which besieged this great artist in oratory, as the time approached—was coming—was going, at which the private signal should have been shown for proposing his health. Mr. P. (who had been, I think, the mayor on the particular occasion indicated) described the restlessness of his manner; how he rose, and retired for half-a-minute into a little parlour behind the chairman's seat; then came back; then whispered, *Not yet, I beseech you, I cannot face them yet;* then sipped a little water, then moved uneasily on his chair, saying, *One moment, if you please; stop, stop; don't hurry;*

one moment, and I shall be up to the mark; in short, fighting with the necessity of taking the final plunge, like one who lingers on the scaffold.

Sir Sidney was at that time slender and thin; having an appearance of emaciation, as though he had suffered hardships and ill-treatment; which, however, I do not remember to have heard. Meantime, his appearance, connected with his recent history, made him a very interesting person to women; and to this hour it remains a mystery with me why and how it came about that in every distribution of honours Sir Sidney Smith was overlooked. In the Mediterranean he made many enemies, especially amongst those of his own profession, who used to speak of him as far too fine a gentleman, and above his calling. Certain it is, that he liked better to be doing business on shore, as at Acre, although he commanded a fine 80-gun ship, the Tiger. But, however that may have been, his services, whether classed as military or naval, were memorably splendid. And, at that time, his connection, of whatsoever nature, with the late Queen Caroline had not occurred. So that altogether, to me, his case is inexplicable.

From the Bath Grammar School I was removed in consequence of an accident, by which at first it was supposed that my skull had been fractured; and the surgeon who attended me at one time talked of trepanning.[1] This was an awful word: but at present I doubt whether in reality anything very serious had happened. In fact, I was always under a nervous panic for my head; and certainly exaggerated my internal feelings without meaning to do so, and this misled the medical attendants. During a long illness which succeeded, my mother, amongst other books past all counting, read to me, in Hoole's translation, the whole of the "Orlando Furioso"; meaning by *the whole* the entire twenty-

[1] The cause of De Quincey's removal from Bath Grammar School is more distinctly described in a juvenile letter of his own at the time, dated 12th March 1779, and addressed to his sister Mary, then in Bristol. From the letter (first published in Mr. Page's *Life of De Quincey*) it appears that one of the under-masters of the school, aiming a blow with his cane at the shoulder of another boy for some impertinence, missed his aim, and hit De Quincey on the head. The consequences, as De Quincey goes on to say, were somewhat serious.—M.

four books into which Hoole had condensed the original forty-six of Ariosto ; and, from my own experience at that time, I am disposed to think that the homeliness of this version is an advantage, from not calling off the attention at all from the narration to the narrator. At this time also I first read the "Paradise Lost" ; but, oddly enough, in the edition of Bentley, that great παραδιορθωτης (or pseudo-restorer of the text). At the close of my illness, the head-master called upon my mother, in company with his son-in-law, Mr. Wilkins, as did a certain Irish Colonel Bowes, who had sons at the school, requesting earnestly, in terms most flattering to myself, that I might be suffered to remain there. But it illustrates my mother's moral austerity that she was shocked at my hearing compliments to my own merits, and was altogether disturbed at what doubtless these gentlemen expected to see received with maternal pride. She declined to let me continue at the Bath School ; and I went to another, at Winkfield, in the County of Wilts, of which the chief recommendation lay in the religious character of the master.[1]

[1] The master was the Rev. Edward Spencer, rector of Winkfield, and the school was a private school of some celebrity, accommodating some thirty or forty boarders.—M.

CHAPTER VII

I ENTER THE WORLD [1]

YES, at this stage of my life—viz., in my fifteenth year—and from this sequestered school, ankle-deep I first stepped into the world. At Winkfield I had staid about a year, or not much more,[2] when I received a letter from a young friend of my own age, Lord Westport,[3] the son of Lord

[1] Substantially, like the last two chapters, an expansion of a portion of the autobiographical paper in *Tait's Magazine* for February 1834, the first of the series of De Quincey's autobiographical papers in that periodical. What with the available collateral matter he found in *Blackwood* and in *Hogg's Instructor*, he had not advanced yet beyond this first autobiographical article in *Tait*.—M.

[2] Although De Quincey passes over this year at Winkfield School rather lightly, both here and in his *Confessions*, it is not an uninteresting year in his biography. The teaching at Winkfield was far inferior to that at the Bath Grammar School; and De Quincey, who was ahead of his fellow-pupils, did much as he liked; but he wrote a great deal both in prose and in verse for a school magazine, called *The Observer*, conducted by the boys, with the assistance of Miss Spencer, the master's daughter. It was during this year also, in June 1800, that he competed for prizes offered by the proprietors of a periodical called *The Juvenile Library* for the best translations of the 22d Ode of Horace, and obtained the third place in the competition,—the first prize going to Leigh Hunt, his senior by nearly a year, and then fresh from Christ's Hospital School, where he had been "first deputy Grecian." Mr. Garnett, who has reprinted De Quincey's performance in a note to his recent edition of the *Confessions of an Opium-Eater*, thinks De Quincey's version deserved the first place.—M.

[3] My acquaintance with Lord Westport was of some years' standing. My father, whose commercial interests led him often to Ireland, had many friends there. One of these was a country gentleman connected with the west; and at his house I first met Lord Westport.

Altamont, inviting me to accompany him to Ireland for the ensuing summer and autumn. This invitation was repeated by his tutor; and my mother, after some consideration, allowed me to accept it.

In the spring of 1800, accordingly, I went up to Eton, for the purpose of joining my friend. Here I several times visited the gardens of the Queen's villa at Frogmore; and, privileged by my young friend's introduction, I had opportunities of seeing and hearing the Queen and all the Princesses; which at that time was a novelty in my life, naturally a good deal prized. Lord Westport's mother had been, before her marriage, Lady Louisa Howe, daughter to the great admiral, Earl Howe, and intimately known to the Royal Family, who, on her account, took a continual and especial notice of her son.[1]

On one of these occasions I had the honour of a brief interview with the King. Madame de Campan mentions, as an amusing incident in her early life, though terrific at the time, and overwhelming to her sense of shame, that not long after her establishment at Versailles, in the service of some one amongst the daughters of Louis XV, having as yet never seen the king, she was one day suddenly introduced to his particular notice, under the following circumstances:—The time was morning; the young lady was not fifteen: her spirits were as the spirits of a fawn in May; her *tour* of duty for the day was either not come, or was gone; and, finding herself alone in a spacious room, what more reasonable thing could she do than amuse herself with *making cheeses;* that is, whirling round, according to a fashion practised by young ladies both in France and England, and pirouetting until the petticoat is inflated like a balloon, and then sinking into a curtsey. Mademoiselle was very solemnly rising from one of these curtseys, in the centre of her collapsing petticoats, when a slight noise alarmed her. Jealous of intruding eyes, yet

[1] Here are the genealogical particulars:—John-Denis Browne, 3d Earl of Altamont in the Irish peerage, born 11th June 1756, married Lady Louisa Howe in May 1787; and their eldest son, born 18th May 1788, was Howe-Peter Browne, styled Viscount Westport. This was De Quincey's young friend, twelve years of age in the summer of 1800, while De Quincey was nearly fifteen.—M.

not dreading more than a servant at worst, she turned ; and, oh heavens ! whom should she behold but his most Christian Majesty advancing upon her, with a brilliant suite of gentlemen, young and old, equipped for the chase, who had been all silent spectators of her performances ! From the king to the last of the train, all bowed to her, and all laughed without restraint, as they passed the abashed amateur of cheese-making. But she, to speak Homerically, wished in that hour that the earth might gape and cover her confusion. Lord Westport and I were about the age of mademoiselle, and not much more decorously engaged, when a turn brought us full in view of a royal party coming along one of the walks at Frogmore. We were, in fact, theorising and practically commenting on the art of throwing stones. Boys have a peculiar contempt for female attempts in that way. For, besides that girls fling wide of the mark, with a certainty that might have won the applause of Galerius,[1] there is a peculiar sling and rotary motion of the arm in launching a stone, which no girl ever *can* attain. From ancient practice, I was somewhat of a proficient in this art, and was discussing the philosophy of female failures, illustrating my doctrines with pebbles, as the case happened to demand ; whilst Lord Westport was practising on the peculiar whirl of the wrist with a shilling ; when suddenly he turned the head of the coin towards me with a significant glance, and in a low voice he muttered some words, of which I caught "*Grace of God*," "*France*[2] *and*

[1] "Sir," said that Emperor to a soldier who had missed the target in succession I know not how many times (suppose we say fifteen), "allow me to offer my congratulations on the truly admirable skill you have shown in keeping clear of the mark. Not to have hit once in so many trials argues the most splendid talents for missing."

[2] *France* was at that time among the royal titles, the act for altering the king's style and title not having then passed. As connected with this subject, I may here mention a project (reported to have been canvassed in council at the time when that alteration *did* take place) for changing the title from King to Emperor. What then occurred strikingly illustrates the general character of the British policy as to all external demonstrations of pomp and national pretension, and its strong opposition to that of France under corresponding circumstances. The principle of *esse quam videri*, and the carelessness about names when the thing is unaffected, generally speaking, must command praise and respect. Yet, considering how often the reputation of power be-

Ireland," "*Defender of the Faith, and so forth.*" This solemn recitation of the legend on the coin was meant as a fanciful way of apprising me that the King was approaching; for Lord Westport had himself lost somewhat of the awe natural

comes, for international purposes, nothing less than power itself, and that words, in many relations of human life, are emphatically things, and sometimes are so to the exclusion of the most absolute things themselves—men of all qualities being often governed by names—the policy of France seems the wiser: viz., *se faire valoir*, even at the price of ostentation. But, at all events, no man is entitled to exercise that extreme candour, forbearance, and spirit of ready concession *in re aliena*, and, above all, *in re politica*, which, on his own account, might be altogether honourable. The council might give away their own honours, but not yours and mine. On a public (or at least on a foreign) interest, it is the duty of a good citizen to be lofty, exacting, almost insolent. And, on this principle, when the ancient style and title of the kingdom fell under revision, if—as I do not deny—it was advisable to retrench all obsolete pretensions as so many memorials of a greatness that in that particular manifestation was now extinct, and therefore, *pro tanto*, rather presumptions of weakness than of strength, as being mementoes of our losses: yet, on the other hand, all counter-vailing claims which had since arisen, and had far more than equiponderated the declension in that one direction, should have been then adopted into the titular heraldry of the nation. It was neither wise nor just to insult foreign nations with assumptions which no longer stood upon any basis of reality. And on that ground *France* was, perhaps, rightly omitted. But why, when the crown was thus remoulded, and its jewellery unset, if this one pearl were to be sur-rendered as an ornament no longer ours—why, we may ask, were not the many and gorgeous jewels, achieved by the national wisdom and power in later times, adopted into the recomposed tiara? Upon what principle did the Romans, the wisest among the children of this world, leave so many inscriptions, as records of their power or their triumphs, upon columns, arches, temples, *basilicæ*, or medals? A national act, a solemn and deliberate act, delivered to history, is a more imperish-able monument than any made by hands: and the title, as revised, which ought to have expressed a change in the dominion simply as to the mode and form of its expansion, now remains as a false, base, abject confession of absolute contraction. Once we had A, B, and C; now we have dwindled into A and B: true, most unfaithful guardian of the national honours; we had lost C, and that you were careful to remember; but we happened to gave gained D, E, F—and so down-wards to Z—all of which duly you forgot.

On this argument, it was urged at the time, in high quarters, that the new re-cast of the crown and sceptre should come out of the fur-nace *equably* improved; as much for what they were authorised to claim, as for what they were compelled to disclaim. And, as one mode of effecting this, it was proposed that the King should become an

to a young person in a first situation of this nature, through his frequent admissions to the royal presence. For my own part, I was as yet a stranger even to the King's person. I had, indeed, seen most or all the Princesses in the way I have

Emperor. Some, indeed, alleged that an Emperor, by its very idea, as received in the Chancery of Europe, presupposes a King paramount over vassal or tributary kings. But it is a sufficient answer to say, that an Emperor is a prince uniting in his own person the *thrones* of several distinct kingdoms; and in effect we adopt that view of the case in giving the title of imperial to the parliament, or common assembly of the three kingdoms. However, the title of the prince was a matter trivial in comparison of the title of his *ditio*, or extent of jurisdiction. This point admits of a striking illustration. In the "Paradise Regained," Milton has given us, in close succession, three matchless pictures of civil grandeur, as exemplified in three different modes by three different states. Availing himself of the brief scriptural notice—"The devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them"—he causes to pass, as in a solemn pageant before us, the two military empires then co-existing, of Parthia and Rome, and finally (under another idea of poetical greatness) the intellectual glories of Athens. From the picture of the Roman grandeur I extract, and beg the reader to weigh, the following lines :—

> "Thence to the gates cast round thine eye, and see
> What conflux issuing forth or entering in :
> Prætors, proconsuls, to their provinces
> Hasting, or on return in robes of state ;
> Lictors and rods, the ensigns of their power ;
> Legions and cohorts, turms of horse and wings ;
> Or embassies from regions far remote,
> In various habits, on the Appian road,
> Or on the Emilian,—some from farthest south,
> Syene, and where the shadow both way falls,
> Meroë, Nilotic isle, and, more to west,
> The realm of Bocchus to the Blackmoor Sea ; . . .
> From India and the Golden Chersonese,
> And utmost Indian isle, Taprobane,
> Dusk faces with white silken turbants wreathed ;
> From Gallia, Gades, and the British West ;
> Germans, and Scythians, and Sarmatians north
> Beyond Danubius to the Tauric pool."

With this superb picture, or abstraction of the Roman pomps and power, when ascending to their utmost altitude, confront the following representative sketch of a great English levee on some high solemnity, suppose the king's birth-day :—"Amongst the presentations to his majesty, we noticed Lord O. S., the Governor-General of India, on his departure for Bengal; Mr. U. Z., with an address from the Upper and

mentioned above ; and occasionally, in the streets of Windsor, the sudden disappearance of all hats from all heads had admonished me that some royal personage or other was then traversing (or, if not traversing, was crossing) the street ; but

Lower Canadas ; Sir L. V., on his appointment as commander of the Forces in Nova Scotia ; General Sir ——, on his return from the Burmese war ['the Golden Chersonese'] ; the Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet ; Mr. B. Z., on his appointment to the Chief-Justiceship at Madras ; Sir R. G., the late Attorney-General at the Cape of Good Hope ; General Y. X., on taking leave for the Governorship of Ceylon ['the utmost Indian isle, Taprobane'] ; Lord F. M., the bearer of the last despatches from head-quarters in Spain ; Col. P., on going out as Captain-General of the Forces in New Holland ; Commodore St. L., on his return from a voyage of discovery towards the North Pole ; the King of Owhyhee, attended by chieftains from the other islands of that cluster ; Col. M'P., on his return from the war in Ashantee, upon which occasion the gallant colonel presented the treaty and tribute from that country ; Admiral ——, on his appointment to the Baltic fleet ; Captain O. N., with despatches from the Red Sea, advising the destruction of the piratical armament and settlements in that quarter, as also in the Persian Gulf ; Sir T. O'N., the late resident in Nepaul, to present his report of the war in that territory, and in adjacent regions—names as yet unknown in Europe ; the Governor of the Leeward Islands, on departing for the West Indies ; various deputations, with petitions, addresses, &c., from islands in remote quarters of the globe, amongst which we distinguished those from Prince Edward Island in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, from the Mauritius, from Java, from the British settlement in Terra del Fuego, from the Christian Churches in the Society, Friendly, and Sandwich Islands—as well as other groups less known in the South Seas ; Admiral H. A., on assuming the command of the Channel fleet ; Major-Gen. X. L., on resigning the Lieut.-Governorship of Gibraltar ; Hon. G. F., on going out as Secretary to the Governor of Malta," &c.

This sketch, too hastily made up, is founded upon a base of a very few years—*i.e.*, we have, in one or two instances, placed in juxtaposition, as co-existences, events separated by a few years. But, if (like Milton's picture of the Roman grandeur) the abstraction had been made from a base of thirty years in extent, and had there been added to the picture (according to his precedent) the many and remote embassies to and from independent states in all quarters of the earth, with how many more groups might this spectacle have been crowded, and especially of those who fall within that most picturesque delineation—

"Dusk faces with white silken turbants wreathed" ?

As it is, I have noticed hardly any places but such as lie absolutely within our jurisdiction. And yet, even under that limitation, how vastly more comprehensive is the chart of British dominion than of the Roman ! To this gorgeous empire some corresponding style and title

either his majesty had never been of the party, or, from distance, I had failed to distinguish him. Now, for the first time, I was meeting him nearly face to face ; for, though the walk we occupied was not that in which the royal party were moving, it ran so near it, and was connected by so many cross-walks at short intervals, that it was a matter of necessity for us, as we were now observed, to go and present ourselves. What happened was pretty nearly as follows :— The King, having first spoken with great kindness to my companion, inquiring circumstantially about his mother and grandmother, as persons particularly well known to himself, then turned his eye upon me. My name, it seems, had been communicated to him ; he did not, therefore, inquire about that. Was I of Eton ? this was his first question. I replied that I was not, but hoped I should be. Had I a father living ? I had not : my father had been dead about eight years. "But you have a mother?' I had. "And she thinks of sending you to Eton ?" I answered that she had expressed such an intention in my hearing ; but I was not sure whether *that* might not be in order to waive an argument with the person to whom she spoke, who happened to have been an Etonian. "Oh, but all people think highly of Eton ; everybody praises Eton. Your mother does right to inquire ; there can be no harm in that ; but the more she inquires, the more she will be satisfied—that I can answer for."

Next came a question which had been suggested by my name. Had my family come into England with the Huguenots at the Revocation of the Edict of Nantz ? This was a tender point with me : of all things, I could not endure to be supposed of French descent ; yet it was a vexation I had constantly to face, as most people supposed that my name

should have been adapted at the revision of the old title, and should yet be adapted.

Apropos of the proposed change in the King's title : Coleridge, on being assured that the new title of the King was to be Emperor of the British Islands and their Dependencies, and on the coin *Imperator Britanniarum*, remarked, that, in this re-manufactured form, the title might be said to be *japanned* : alluding to this fact,—that, amongst *insular* sovereigns, the only one known to Christian diplomacy by the title of Emperor is the sovereign of Japan.

argued a French origin; whereas a Norman origin argued pretty certainly an origin *not* French. I replied, with some haste, "Please your majesty, the family has been in England since the Conquest." It is probable that I coloured, or showed some mark of discomposure, with which, however, the King was not displeased, for he smiled, and said, "How do you know that?" Here I was at a loss for a moment how to answer; for I was sensible that it did not become me to occupy the King's attention with any long stories or traditions about a subject so unimportant as my own family; and yet it was necessary that I should say something, unless I would be thought to have denied my Huguenot descent upon no reason or authority. After a moment's hesitation, I said in effect, that the family from which I traced my descent had certainly been a great and leading one at the era of the Barons' Wars, as also in one at least of the Crusades; and that I had myself seen many notices of this family, not only in books of heraldry, &c., but in the very earliest of all English books. "And what book was that?" "Robert of Gloucester's 'Metrical Chronicle,' which I understood, from internal evidence, to have been written about 1280." The King smiled again, and said, "I know, I know." But what it was that he knew, long afterwards puzzled me to conjecture. I now imagine, however, that he meant to claim a knowledge of the book I referred to, a thing which at that time I thought improbable, supposing the King's acquaintance with literature not to be very extensive, nor likely to have comprehended any knowledge at all of the black-letter period. But in this belief I was greatly mistaken, as I was afterwards fully convinced by the best evidence from various quarters. That library of 120,000 volumes which George IV presented to the nation, and which has since gone to swell the collection at the British Museum, had been formed (as I was often assured by persons to whom the whole history of the library, and its growth from small rudiments, was familiarly known) under the direct personal superintendence of George III. It was a favourite and pet creation; and his care extended even to the dressing of the books in appropriate bindings, and (as one man told me) to their *health;* explaining himself to mean, that in any case where a book

was worm-eaten, or touched, however slightly, with the worm, the King was anxious to prevent the injury from extending, or from infecting others by close neighbourhood; for it is supposed by many that such injuries spread rapidly in favourable situations. One of my informants was a German bookbinder of great respectability, settled in London, and for many years employed by the Admiralty as a confidential binder of records or journals containing secrets of office, &c. Through this connection he had been recommended to the service of his majesty, whom he used to see continually in the course of his attendance at Buckingham House, where the books were deposited. This artist had (originally in the way of his trade) become well acquainted with the money value of English books; and that knowledge cannot be acquired without some concurrent knowledge of their subject and their kind of merit. Accordingly, he was tolerably well qualified to estimate any man's attainments as a reading man; and from him I received such circumstantial accounts of many conversations he had held with the King, evidently reported with entire good faith and simplicity, that I cannot doubt the fact of his majesty's very general acquaintance with English literature. Not a day passed, whenever the King happened to be at Buckingham House, without his coming into the binding-room, and minutely inspecting the progress of the binder and his allies—the gilders, toolers, &c. From the outside of the book the transition was natural to its value in the scale of bibliography; and in that way my informant had ascertained that the King was well acquainted, not only with Robert of Gloucester, but with all the other early chronicles, published by Hearne, and, in fact, possessed that entire series which rose at one period to so enormous a price. From this person I learned afterwards that the King prided himself especially upon his early folios of Shakspere; that is to say, not merely upon the excellence of the individual copies in a bibliographical sense, as "*tall* copies," and having large margins, &c., but chiefly from their value, in relation to the most authentic basis for the text of the poet. And thus it appears that at least two of our kings, Charles I. and George III, have made it their pride to profess a reverential esteem for Shakspere. This bookbinder

added his attestation to the truth (or to the generally reputed truth) of a story which I had heard from other authority—viz., that the librarian, or, if not officially the librarian, at least the chief director in everything relating to the books, was an illegitimate son of Frederick, Prince of Wales (son to George II), and therefore half-brother of the king. His own taste and inclinations, it seemed, concurred with his brother's wishes in keeping him in a subordinate rank and an obscure station; in which, however, he enjoyed affluence without anxiety, or trouble, or courtly envy, and the luxury, which he most valued, of a superb library. He lived and died, I have heard, as plain Mr. Barnard. At one time I disbelieved the story (which possibly may have been long known to the public), on the ground that even George III would not have differed so widely from princes in general as to leave a brother of his own, however unaspiring, wholly undistinguished by public honours. But, having since ascertained that a naval officer, well known to my own family, and to a naval brother of my own in particular, by assistance rendered to him repeatedly when a midshipman in changing his ship, was undoubtedly an illegitimate son of George III, and yet that he never rose higher than the rank of post captain, though privately acknowledged by his father and other members of the royal family, I found the insufficiency of that objection. The fact is, and it does honour to the King's memory, he reverenced the moral feelings of his country, which are, in this and in all points of domestic morals, severe and high-toned (I say it in defiance of writers, such as Lord Byron, Mr. Hazlitt, &c., who hated alike the just and the unjust pretensions of England) in a degree absolutely incomprehensible to *Southern* Europe. He had his frailties like other children of Adam; but he did not seek to fix the public attention upon them, after the fashion of Louis Quatorze or our Charles II, and so many other continental princes. There were living witnesses (more than one) of *his* aberrations as of theirs; but he, with better feelings than they, did not choose, by placing these witnesses upon a pedestal of honour, surmounted by heraldic trophies, to emblazon his own transgressions to coming generations, and to force back the gaze of a remote posterity upon his own

infirmities. It was his ambition to be the *father* of his people in a sense not quite so literal. These were things, however, of which at that time I had not heard.

During the whole dialogue, I did not even once remark that hesitation and iteration of words generally attributed to George III; indeed, *so* generally, that it must often have existed; but, in this case, I suppose that the brevity of his sentences operated to deliver him from any embarrassment of utterance, such as might have attended longer and more complex sentences, where some anxiety was natural to overtake the thoughts as they arose. When we observed that the King had paused in his stream of questions, which succeeded rapidly to each other, we understood it as a signal of dismissal; and, making a profound obeisance, we retired backwards a few steps. His majesty smiled in a very gracious manner, waved his hand towards us, and said something (I do not know what) in a peculiarly kind accent; he then turned round, and the whole party along with him; which set us at liberty without impropriety to turn to the right-about ourselves, and make our egress from the gardens.

This incident, to me at my age, was very naturally one of considerable interest. One reflection it suggested afterwards, which was this: Could it be likely that much truth of a general nature, bearing upon man and social interests, could ever reach the ear of a king, under the etiquette of a court, and under that one rule which seemed singly sufficient to foreclose all natural avenues to truth—the rule, I mean, by which it is forbidden to address a question to the King. I was well aware, before I saw him, that in the royal presence, like the dead soldier in Lucan, whom the mighty necromancing witch tortures back into a momentary life, I must have no voice except for *answers*:—

> "Vox illi linguaque tantum
> *Responsura* datur."[1]

I was to originate nothing myself; and at my age, before so exalted a personage, the mere instincts of reverential demeanour would at any rate have dictated such a rule.

[1] For the sake of those who are no classical scholars, I explain: Voice and language are restored to him only to the extent of *replying*.

But what becomes of that man's general condition of mind in relation to all the great objects moving on the field of human experience, where it is a law generally for almost all who approach him, that they shall confine themselves to replies, absolute responses, or, at most, to a prosecution or carrying forward of a proposition delivered by the *protagonist*, or supreme leader of the conversation? For it must be remembered that, generally speaking, the effect of putting no question is to transfer into the other party's hands the entire *originating* movement of the dialogue; and thus, in a musical metaphor, the great man is the sole modulator and determiner of the key in which the conversation proceeds. It is true, that sometimes, by travelling a little beyond the question in your answer, you may enlarge the basis, so as to bring up some new train of thought which you wish to introduce; and may suggest fresh matter as effectually as if you had the liberty of more openly guiding the conversation, whether by way of question or by direct origination of a topic; but this depends on skill to improve an opening, or vigilance to seize it at the instant; and, after all, much upon accident: to say nothing of the crime (a sort of petty treason, perhaps, or what is it?), if you should be detected in your "improvements" and "enlargements of basis." The King might say,—"Friend, I must tell my attorney-general to speak with you; for I detect a kind of treason in your replies. They go too far. They include something which tempts my majesty to a notice; which is, in fact, for the long and the short of it, that you have been circumventing me half unconsciously into answering a question which has silently been insinuated by *you*." Freedom of communication, unfettered movement of thought, there can be none under such a ritual, which tends violently to a Byzantine, or even to a Chinese, result of freezing as it were, all natural and healthy play of the faculties under the petrific mace of absolute ceremonial and fixed precedent. For it will hardly be objected, that the privileged condition of a few official councillors and state ministers, whose hurry and oppression of thought from public care will rarely allow them to speak on any other subject than business, *can* be a remedy large enough for so large an evil. True it is, that a peculiarly

frank or jovial temperament in a sovereign may do much for a season to thaw this punctilious reserve and ungenial constraint; but *that* is an accident, and personal to an individual. And, on the other hand, to balance even this, it may be remarked, that, in all noble and fashionable society, where there happens to be a pride in sustaining what is deemed a good *tone* in conversation, it is peculiarly aimed at (and even artificially managed), that no lingering or loitering upon one theme, no protracted discussion, shall be allowed. And, doubtless, as regards merely the treatment of convivial or purely *social* communication of ideas (which also is a great art), this practice is right. I admit willingly that an uncultured brute, who is detected at an elegant table in the atrocity of absolute discussion or disputation, ought to be summarily removed by a police-officer; and possibly the law will warrant his being held to bail for one or two years, according to the enormity of his case. But men are not always enjoying, or seeking to enjoy, social pleasure; they seek also, and have need to seek continually, both through books and men, intellectual growth, fresh power, fresh strength, to keep themselves ahead or abreast of this moving, surging, billowing world of ours; especially in these modern times, when society revolves through so many new phases, and shifts its aspects with so much more velocity than in past ages. A king, especially of this country, needs, beyond most other men, to keep himself in a continual state of communication, as it were by some vital and organic sympathy, with the most essential of these changes. And yet this punctilio of etiquette, like some vicious forms of law, or technical fictions grown too narrow for the age, which will not allow of cases coming before the court in a shape desired alike by the plaintiff and the defendant, is so framed as to defeat equally the wishes of a prince disposed to gather knowledge wherever he can find it, and of those who may be best fitted to give it.

For a few minutes on three other occasions, before we finally quitted Eton, I again saw the King; and always with renewed interest. He was kind to everybody—condescending and affable in a degree which I am bound to remember with personal gratitude: and one thing I *had* heard of him,

which even then, and much more as my mind opened to a wider compass of deeper reflection, won my respect. I have always reverenced a man of whom it could be truly said, that he had once, and once only (for more than once implies another unsoundness in the quality of the passion), been desperately in love; in love, that is to say, in a terrific excess, so as to dally, under suitable circumstances, with the thoughts of cutting his own throat, or even (as the case might be) the throat of her whom he loved above all this world. It will be understood that I am not justifying such enormities; on the contrary, they are wrong, exceedingly wrong; but it is evident that people in general feel pretty much as I do, from the extreme sympathy with which the public always pursue the fate of any criminal who has committed a murder of this class, even though tainted (as generally it is) with jealousy, which, in itself, wherever it argues habitual mistrust, is an ignoble passion.[1]

Great passions (do not understand me, reader, as though I meant great appetites), passions moving in a great orbit, and transcending little regards, are always arguments of some latent nobility. There are, indeed, but few men and few women capable of great passions, or (properly speaking) of passions at all. Hartley, in his mechanism of the human mind, propagates the sensations by means of vibrations, and by miniature vibrations, which, in a Roman form for such miniatures, he terms *vibratiuncles*. Now, of men and women generally, parodying that terminology, we ought to say—not that they are governed by passions, or at all capable of passions, but of *passiuncles*. And thence it is that few men go, or can go, beyond a little *love-liking*, as it is called; and hence also, that, in a world where so little conformity takes place between the ideal speculations of men and the gross

[1] Accordingly, Coleridge has contended, and I think with truth, that the passion of Othello is *not* jealousy. So much I know by report, as the *result* of a lecture which he read at the Royal Institution. His arguments I did not hear. To me it is evident that Othello's state of feeling was not that of a degrading, suspicious rivalship, but the state of perfect misery, arising out of this dilemma, the most affecting, perhaps, to contemplate, of any which *can* exist—viz., the dire necessity of loving without limit one whom the heart pronounces to be unworthy of that love.

realities of life, where marriages are governed in so vast a proportion by convenience, prudence, self-interest—anything, in short, rather than deep sympathy between the parties—and, consequently, where so many men must be crossed in their inclinations, we yet hear of so few tragic catastrophes on that account. The King, however, was certainly among the number of those who are susceptible of a deep passion, if everything be true that is reported of him. All the world has heard that he was passionately devoted to the beautiful sister of the then Duke of Richmond. That was before his marriage: and I believe it is certain that he not only wished, but sincerely meditated, to have married her. So much is matter of notoriety. But other circumstances of the case have been sometimes reported, which imply great distraction of mind, and a truly profound possession of his heart by that early passion: which, in a prince whose feelings are liable so much to the dispersing and dissipating power of endless interruption from new objects and fresh claims on the attention, coupled also with the fact that he never but in this one case professed anything amounting to extravagant or frantic attachment, do seem to argue that the King was truly and passionately in love with Lady Sarah Lennox. He had a *demon* upon him, and was under a real *possession*. If so, what a lively expression of the mixed condition of human fortunes, and not less of another truth equally affecting—viz., the dread conflicts with the will—the mighty agitations which silently, and in darkness, are convulsing many a heart, where, to the external eye, all is tranquil—that this king, at the very threshold of his public career, at the very moment when he was binding about his brows the golden circle of sovereignty; when Europe watched him with interest, and the kings of the earth with envy; not one of the vulgar titles to happiness being wanting:—youth, health, a throne the most splendid on this planet—general popularity amongst a nation of freemen, and the hope which belongs to powers as yet almost untried—that, even under these most flattering auspices, he should be called upon to make a sacrifice the most bitter of all to which human life is liable! He made it; and he might then have said to his people—"For you, and to my public

duties, I have made a sacrifice which none of you would have made for me." In years long ago, I have heard a woman of rank recurring to the circumstances of Lady Sarah's first appearance at court after the King's marriage. If I recollect rightly, it occurred after that lady's own marriage with Sir Charles Bunbury.[1] Many eyes were upon both parties at that moment—female eyes, especially—and the speaker did not disguise the excessive interest with which she herself observed them. Lady Sarah was not agitated, but the King *was*. He seemed anxious, sensibly trembled, changed colour, and *shivered*, as Lady S. B. drew near. But, to quote the one single eloquent sentiment which I remember after a lapse of thirty years in Monk Lewis's Romantic Tales—"In this world all things pass away; blessed be Heaven, and the bitter pangs by which sometimes it is pleased to recall its wanderers, even our passions pass away!" And thus it happened that this storm also was laid asleep and forgotten, together with so many others of its kind that have been, and that shall be again, so long as man is man, and woman woman. Meantime, in justification of a passion so profound, one would be glad to think highly of the lady that inspired it; and, therefore, I heartily hope that the insults offered to her memory in the scandalous "Memoirs" of the Duc de Lauzun are mere calumnies, and records rather of his presumptuous wishes, than of any actual successes.[2]

[1] The marriage of Lady Sarah Lennox with Sir Thomas Charles Bunbury, Bart., was in 1762.—M.

[2] That book, I am aware, is generally treated as a forgery; but internal evidence, drawn from the tone and quality of the revelations there made, will not allow me to think it altogether such. There is an *abandon* and carelessness in parts which mark its sincerity. Its authenticity I cannot doubt. But *that* proves nothing for the truth of the particular stories which it contains. A book of scandalous and defamatory stories, especially where the writer has had the baseness to betray the confidence reposed in his honour by women, and to boast of favours alleged to have been granted him, it is always fair to consider as *ipso facto* a tissue of falsehoods; and on the following argument,—that these are exposures which, even if true, none but the basest of men would have made. Being, therefore, on the hypothesis most favourable to his veracity, the basest of men, the author is self-denounced as vile enough to have forged the stories, and cannot com-

However, to leave dissertation behind me, and to resume the thread of my narrative, an incident, which about this period impressed me even more profoundly than my introduction to a royal presence, was my first visit to London.

plain if he should be roundly accused of doing that which he has taken pains to prove himself capable of doing. This way of arguing might be applied with fatal effect to the Duc de Lauzun's "Memoirs," supposing them written with a view to publication. But, by possibility, that was not the case. The Duc de L. terminated his profligate life, as is well known, on the scaffold, during the storms of the French Revolution; and nothing in his whole career won him so much credit as the way in which he closed it; for he went to his death with a romantic carelessness, and even gaiety of demeanour. His "Memoirs" were not published by himself: the publication was posthumous; and by whom authorised, or for what purpose, is not exactly known. Probably the manuscript fell into mercenary hands, and was published merely on a speculation of pecuniary gain. From some passages, however, I cannot but infer that the writer did not mean to bring it before the public, but wrote it rather as a series of private memoranda, to aid his own recollection of circumstances and dates. The Duc de Lauzun's account of his intrigue with Lady Sarah goes so far as to allege that he rode down in disguise, from London to Sir Charles B.'s country seat, agreeably to a previous assignation, and that he was admitted by that lady's confidential attendant, through a back staircase, at the time when Sir Charles (a foxhunter, but a man of the highest breeding and fashion) was himself at home, and occupied in the duties of hospitality.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NATION OF LONDON[1]

It was a most heavenly day in May of this year (1800) when I first beheld and first entered this mighty wilderness, the city—no ! not the city, but the nation—of London. Often since then, at distances of two and three hundred miles or more from this colossal emporium of men, wealth, arts, and intellectual power, have I felt the sublime expression of her enormous magnitude in one simple form of ordinary occurrence—viz., in the vast droves of cattle, suppose upon the great north roads, all with their heads directed to London, and expounding the size of the attracting body, together with the force of its attractive power, by the never-ending succession of these droves, and the remoteness from the capital of the lines upon which they were moving. A suction so powerful, felt along radii so vast, and a consciousness, at the same time, that upon other radii still more vast, both by land and by sea, the same suction is operating, night and day, summer and winter, and hurrying for ever into one centre the infinite means needed for her infinite purposes, and the endless tributes to the skill or to the luxury of her endless population, crowds the imagination with a pomp to which there is nothing corresponding upon this planet, either amongst the things that have been, or the things that are.

[1] De Quincey has now reached the second of his autobiographical articles in *Tait's Magazine*, published in March 1834 ; and the present chapter is mainly a reproduction of that article, but with additions and changes, and with a special title invented for it.—M.

Or, if any exception there is, it must be sought in ancient Rome.[1] We, upon this occasion, were in an open carriage,

[1] "*Ancient Rome*" :—Vast, however, as the London is of this day, I incline to think that it is below the Rome of Trajan. It has long been a settled opinion among scholars that the computations of Lipsius on this point were prodigiously overcharged ; and formerly I shared in that belief. But closer study of the question, and a laborious *collation* of the different data (for any single record, independently considered, can here establish nothing), have satisfied me that Lipsius was nearer the truth than his critics ; and that the Roman population of every class—slaves, aliens, peoples of the suburbs, included—lay between four and six millions : in which case the London of 1833, which counts more than a million and a-half, but less than two millions [*Note.*—Our present London of 1853 counts two millions, *plus* as many thousands as there are days in the year.], may be taken κατα πλατος, as lying between one-fourth and one-third of Rome. To discuss this question thoroughly would require a separate memoir, for which, after all, there are not sufficient materials : meantime I will make this remark :—That the ordinary computations of a million, or a million and a-quarter, derived from the surviving accounts of the different "regions," apply to Rome *within* the Pomærium, and are, therefore, no more valid for the total Rome of Trajan's time, stretching so many miles beyond it, than the bills of mortality for what is technically "London within the walls" can serve at this day as a base for estimating the population of that total London which we mean and presume in our daily conversation. Secondly, even for the Rome within these limits the computations are not commensurate, by not allowing for the prodigious *height* of the houses in Rome, which much transcended that of modern cities. On this last point, I will translate a remarkable sentence from the Greek rhetorician Aristides [*Note.*—Aelius Aristides, Greek by his birth, who flourished in the time of the Antonines] ; to some readers it will be new and interesting :—"And, as oftentimes we see that a man who greatly excels others in bulk and strength is not content with any display, however ostentatious, of his powers, short of that where he is exhibited surmounting himself with a pyramid of other men, one set standing upon the shoulders of another ; so also this city, stretching forth her foundations over areas so vast, is yet not satisfied with those superficial dimensions ; *that* contents her not ; but upon one city rearing another of corresponding proportions, and upon that another, pile resting upon pile, houses overlaying houses, in aerial succession ; so, and by similar steps, she achieves a character of architecture justifying, as it were, the very promise of her name ; and with reference to that name, and its Grecian meaning, we may say, that here nothing meets our eyes in any direction, but mere *Rome! Rome!*" [*Note.*—This word Ῥωμη (Romé), on which the rhetorician plays, is the common Greek term for *strength.*] "And hence," says Aristides, "I derive the following conclusion : that if any one, decomposing this series of strata, were disposed to unshell, as it were, this existing Rome from its present

and, chiefly (as I imagine) to avoid the dust, we approached London by rural lanes, where any such could be found, or, at least, along by-roads, quiet and shady, collateral to the main roads. In that mode of approach, we missed some features of the sublimity belonging to any of the common approaches upon a main road; we missed the whirl and the uproar, the tumult and the agitation, which continually thicken and thicken throughout the last dozen miles before you reach the suburbs. Already at three stages' distance (say, 40 miles from London), upon some of the greatest roads, the dim presentiment of some vast capital reaches you obscurely, and like a misgiving. This blind sympathy with a mighty but unseen object, some vast magnetic range of Alps,

crowded and towering co-acervations; and, thus degrading these aerial Romes, were to plant them on the ground, side by side, in orderly succession; according to all appearance, the whole vacant area of Italy would be filled with these dismantled storeys of Rome, and we should be presented with the spectacle of one continuous city, stretching its labyrinthine pomp to the shores of the Adriatic." This is so far from being meant as a piece of rhetoric that, on the very contrary, the whole purpose is to substitute, for a vague and rhetorical expression of the Roman grandeur, one of a more definite character—viz., by presenting its dimensions in a new form, and supposing the city to be uncrested, as it were; its upper tiers to be what the sailors call *unshipped;* and the dethroned storeys to be all drawn up in rank and file upon the ground; according to which assumption he implies that the city would stretch from the *mare Superum* to the *mare Inferum*—*i.e.*, from the sea of Tuscany to the Adriatic.

The fact is, as Casaubon remarked, upon occasion of a ridiculous blunder in estimating the largesses of a Roman emperor, that the error on most questions of Roman policy or institutions tends not, as is usual, in the direction of excess, but of defect. All things were colossal there; and the probable, as estimated upon our modern scale, is not unfrequently the impossible, as regarded Roman habits. Lipsius certainly erred extravagantly at times, and was a rash speculator on many subjects: witness his book on the Roman amphitheatres; but not on the magnitude of Rome, or the amount of its population. I will add, upon this subject, that the whole political economy of the ancients, if we except Boeckh's accurate investigations (*Die Staatshaushaltung der Athener*), which, properly speaking, cannot be called political economy, is a mine into which scarce a single shaft has yet been sunk. But I must also add, that everything will depend upon *collation* of facts, and the bringing of indirect notices into immediate juxtaposition, so as to throw light on each other. *Direct* and positive information there is little on these topics; and that little has been gleaned.

in your neighbourhood, continues to increase, you know not how. Arrived at the last station for changing horses,—Barnet, suppose, on one of the north roads, or Hounslow on the western,—you no longer think (as in all other places) of naming the next stage ; nobody says, on pulling up, " Horses on to London " ; that would sound ridiculous ; one mighty idea broods over all minds, making it impossible to suppose any other destination. Launched upon this final stage, you soon begin to feel yourself entering the stream as it were of a Norwegian *maelstrom ;* and the stream at length becomes the rush of a cataract. What is meant by the Latin word *trepidatio ?* Not anything peculiarly connected with panic ; it belongs as much to the hurrying to and fro of a coming battle, as of a coming flight ; to a marriage festival as much as to a massacre ; *agitation* is the nearest English word. This *trepidation* increases both audibly and visibly at every half-mile, pretty much as one may suppose the roar of Niagara and the thrilling of the ground to grow upon the senses in the last ten miles of approach, with the wind in its favour, until at length it would absorb and extinguish all other sounds whatsoever. Finally, for miles before you reach a suburb of London such as Islington, for instance, a last great sign and augury of the immensity which belongs to the coming metropolis forces itself upon the dullest observer, in the growing sense of his own utter insignificance. Everywhere else in England, you yourself, horses, carriage, attendants (if you travel with any), are regarded with attention, perhaps even curiosity : at all events you are seen. But, after passing the final post-house on every avenue to London, for the latter ten or twelve miles, you become aware that you are no longer noticed : nobody sees you ; nobody hears you ; nobody regards you ; you do not even regard yourself. In fact, how should you at the moment of first ascertaining your own total unimportance in the sum of things—a poor shivering unit in the aggregate of human life ? Now, for the first time, whatever manner of man you were or seemed to be at starting, squire or " squireen," lord or lordling, and however related to that city, hamlet, or solitary house, from which yesterday or to-day you slipped your cable—beyond disguise you find yourself but one wave

in a total Atlantic, one plant (and a parasitical plant besides, needing alien props) in a forest of America.

These are feelings which do not belong by preference to thoughtful people—far less to people merely sentimental. No man ever was left to himself for the first time in the streets, as yet unknown, of London, but he must have been saddened and mortified, perhaps terrified, by the sense of desertion and utter loneliness which belong to his situation. No loneliness can be like that which weighs upon the heart in the centre of faces never-ending, without voice or utterance for him; eyes innumerable, that have "no speculation" in their orbs which *he* can understand; and hurrying figures of men and women weaving to and fro, with no apparent purposes intelligible to a stranger, seeming like a mask of maniacs, or, oftentimes, like a pageant of phantoms. The great length of the streets in many quarters of London; the continual opening of transient glimpses into other vistas equally far-stretching, going off at right angles to the one which you are traversing; and the murky atmosphere which, settling upon the remoter end of every long avenue, wraps its termination in gloom and uncertainty; all these are circumstances aiding that sense of vastness and illimitable proportions which for ever brood over the aspect of London in its interior. Much of the feeling which belongs to the outside of London, in its approaches for the last few miles, I had lost, in consequence of the stealthy route of by-roads, lying near Uxbridge and Watford, through which we crept into the suburbs. But, for that reason, the more abrupt and startling had been the effect of emerging somewhere into the Edgeware Road, and soon afterwards into the very streets of London itself;—though *what* streets, or even what quarter of London, is now totally obliterated from my mind, having perhaps never been comprehended. All that I remember is one monotonous awe and blind sense of mysterious grandeur and Babylonian confusion, which seemed to pursue and to invest the whole equipage of human life, as we moved for nearly two hours[1] through

[1] "*Two hours*":—This slow progress must, however, in part be ascribed to Mr. Gr——'s non-acquaintance with the roads, both town and rural, along the whole line of our progress from Uxbridge.

streets ; sometimes brought to anchor for ten minutes or more, by what is technically called a "lock,"—that is, a line of carriages of every description inextricably massed and obstructing each other, far as the eye could stretch ; and then, as if under an enchanter's rod, the "lock" seemed to thaw ; motion spread with the fluent race of light or sound through the whole icebound mass, until the subtle influence reached *us* also ; who were again absorbed into the great rush of flying carriages ; or, at times, we turned off into some less tumultuous street, but of the same mile-long character ; and finally, drawing up about noon, we alighted at some place, which is as little within my distinct remembrance as the route by which we reached it.

For what had we come ? To see London. And what were the limits within which we proposed to crowd that little feat ? At five o'clock we were to dine at Porters ——, a seat of Lord Westport's grandfather ; and, from the distance, it was necessary that we should leave London at half-past three ; so that a little more than three hours were all we had for London. Our charioteer, my friend's tutor, was summoned away from us on business until that hour ; and we were left, therefore, entirely to ourselves and to our own skill in turning the time to the best account, for contriving (if such a thing were possible) to do something or other which, by any fiction of courtesy, or constructively, so as to satisfy a lawyer, or in a sense sufficient to win a wager, might be taken and received for having "seen London."

What could be done ? We sat down, I remember, in a mood of despondency, to consider. The spectacles were too many by thousands ; *inopes nos copia fecit ;* our very wealth made us poor ; and the choice was distracted. But which of them all could be thought general or representative enough to stand for the universe of London ? We could not traverse the whole circumference of this mighty orb ; that was clear ; and, therefore, the next best thing was to place ourselves as much as possible in some relation to the spectacles of London, which might answer to the centre. Yet how ? That sounded well and metaphysical ; but what did it mean if acted upon ? What was the centre of London for any purpose whatever — latitudinarian or longitudinarian —

literary, social, or mercantile—geographical, astronomical, or (as Mrs. Malaprop kindly suggests) diabolical? Apparently that we should stay at our inn: for in that way we seemed best to distribute our presence equally amongst all—viz., by going to none in particular.

Three times in my life I have had my taste—that is, my sense of proportions—memorably outraged. Once was, by a painting of Cape Horn, which seemed almost treasonably below its rank and office in this world—as the terminal abutment of our mightiest continent, and also the hinge, as it were, of our greatest circumnavigations—of all, in fact, which can be called *classical* circumnavigations.

To have "doubled Cape Horn"—at one time, what a sound it had!—yet how ashamed we should be if that cape were ever to be seen from the moon! A party of Englishmen, I have heard, went up Mount Etna during the night, to be ready for sunrise—a common practice with tourists both in Switzerland, Wales, Cumberland, &c.; but, as all must see who take the trouble to reflect, not likely to repay the trouble; seeing that everything which offers a *picture*, when viewed from a station nearly horizontal, becomes a mere *map* to an eye placed at an elevation of 3000 feet above it; and so thought, in the sequel, the Etna party. The sun, indeed, rose visibly, and not more apparelled in clouds than was desirable: yet so disappointed were they, and so disgusted with the sun in particular, that they unanimously *hissed* him, though, of course, it was useless to cry, "Off! off!" Here, however, the fault was in their own erroneous expectations and not in the sun, who doubtless did his best. For, generally, a sunrise and a sunset ought to be seen from the valley, or at most horizontally.[1] But as to

[1] Hence it may be said, that nature regulates our position for such spectacles, without any intermeddling of ours. When, indeed, a mountain stands, like Snowdon or Great Gavel in Cumberland, at the centre of a mountainous region, it is not denied that, at some seasons, when the early beams strike through great vistas in the hills, splendid effects of light and shade are produced; strange, however, rather than beautiful. But from an insulated mountain, or one upon the outer ring of the hilly tract, such as Skiddaw in Cumberland, the first effect is to translate the landscape from a *picture* into a *map*; and the total result, as a celebrated author once said, is the *infinity of littleness*.

Cape Horn, *that* (by comparison with its position and its functions) was really a disgrace to the planet; it is not the spectator that is in fault *here*, but the object itself, the Birmingham cape. For, consider, it is not only the "specular mount," keeping watch and ward over a sort of trinity of oceans, and, by all tradition, the circumavigator's gate of entrance to the Pacific, but also it is the temple of the god Terminus for all the Americas. So that, in relation to such dignities, it seemed to me, in the drawing, a make-shift, put up by a carpenter, until the true Cape Horn should be ready; or, perhaps, a drop-scene from the opera-house. This was one case of disproportion: the others were—the final and ceremonial valediction of Garrick, on retiring from his profession; and the Pall Mall inauguration of George IV on the day of his accession [1] to the throne. The utter *ir*relation, in both cases, of the audience to the scene (*audience*, I say, as say we must, for the sum of the spectators in the second instance, as well as of the auditors in the first) threw upon each a ridicule not to be effaced. It is in any case impossible for an actor to say words of farewell to those for whom he really designs his farewell. He cannot bring his true object before himself. To whom is it that he would offer his last adieus? We are told by one—who, if he loved Garrick, certainly did not love Garrick's profession, nor would even, through *him*, have paid it any undue compliment—that the retirement of this great artist had "eclipsed the gaiety of nations." To nations, then, to his own generation it was, that he owed his farewell: but, of a generation,

[1] Accession was it, or his proclamation? The case was this:—About the middle of the day, the King came out into the portico of Carlton House; and, addressing himself (addressing his gestures, I mean) to the assemblage of people in Pall Mall, he bowed repeatedly to the right and to the left, and then retired. I mean no disrespect to that prince in recalling those circumstances: no doubt, he acted upon the suggestion of others; and, perhaps, also under a sincere emotion on witnessing the enthusiasm of those outside; but *that* could not cure the original absurdity of recognising as a representative audience, clothed with the national functions of recognising *himself*, a chance gathering of passengers through a single street, between whom and any mob from his own stables and kitchens there could be no essential difference which logic, or law, or constitutional principle could recognise.

what organ is there which can sue or be sued, that can thank or be thanked ? Neither by fiction nor by delegation can you bring their bodies into court. A king's audience, on the other hand, *might* be had as an authorised representative body. But, when we consider the composition of a casual and chance auditory, whether in a street or a theatre ; secondly, the small size of a modern audience, even in Drury Lane (4500 at the most), not by one-eightieth part the *complement* of the Circus Maximus ; most of all, when we consider the want of symmetry or commensurateness, to any extended duration of time, in the *acts* of such an audience, which acts lie in the vanishing expressions of its vanishing emotions—acts so essentially fugitive, even when organised into an art and a tactical system of *imbrices* and *bombi* (as they were at Alexandria, and afterwards at the Neapolitan and Roman theatres), that they could not protect themselves from dying in the very moment of their birth : laying together all these considerations, we see the incongruity of any audience, so constituted, to any purpose less evanescent than their own tenure of existence.

Just such in disproportion as these cases had severally been, was our present problem in relation to our time or other means for accomplishing it. In debating the matter, we lost half-an-hour ; but at length we reduced the question to a choice between Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral. I know not that we could have chosen better. The rival edifices, as we understood from the waiter, were about equidistant from our own station ; but, being too remote from each other to allow of our seeing both, "we tossed up," to settle the question between the elder lady and the younger. "Heads" came up, which stood for the Abbey. But, as neither of us was quite satisfied with this decision, we agreed to make another appeal to the wisdom of chance, second thoughts being best. This time the Cathedral turned up ; and so it came to pass that, with us, the having *seen London* meant having seen St. Paul's.

The first view of St. Paul's, it may be supposed, overwhelmed us with awe ; and I did not at that time imagine that the sense of magnitude could be more deeply impressed. One thing interrupted our pleasure. The superb objects of

curiosity within the Cathedral were shown for separate fees. There were seven, I think ; and any one could be seen independently of the rest for a few pence. The whole amount was a trifle ; fourteenpence, I think ; but we were followed by a sort of persecution—"Would we not see the bell?"—"Would we not see the model?"—"Surely we would not go away without visiting the Whispering Gallery?" solicitations which troubled the silence and sanctity of the place, and must tease others as it then teased us, who wished to contemplate in quiet this great monument of the national grandeur, which was at that very time [1] beginning to take a station also in the land as a depository for the dust of her heroes. What struck us most in the whole *interior* of the pile was the view taken from the spot immediately under the dome, being, in fact, the very same which, five years afterwards, received the remains of Lord Nelson. In one of the aisles going off from this centre, we saw the flags of France, Spain, and Holland, the whole trophies of the war, swinging pompously, and expanding their massy draperies, slowly and heavily, in the upper gloom, as they were swept at intervals by currents of air. At this moment we were provoked by the showman at our elbow renewing his vile iteration of "Twopence, gentlemen ; no more than twopence for each" ; and so on until we left the place. The same complaint has often been made as to Westminster Abbey. Where the wrong lies, or where it commences, I know not. Certainly I nor any man can have a right to expect that the poor men who attended us should give up their time for nothing, or even to be angry with them for a sort of persecution, on the degree of which possibly might depend the comfort of their own families. Thoughts of famishing children at home leave little room for nice regards of delicacy abroad. The individuals, therefore, might or might not be blameable. But in any case the system is palpably wrong. The nation is entitled to a free enjoyment of its own public monuments : not free only in the sense of being gratuitous, but free also from the molestation

[1] Already monuments had been voted by the House of Commons in this cathedral, and I am not sure but they were nearly completed, to two captains who had fallen at the Nile.

of *showmen*, with their imperfect knowledge and their vulgar sentiment.

Yet, after all, what is this system of restriction and annoyance, compared with that which operates on the use of the national libraries; or *that*, again, to the system of exclusion from some of these, where an absolute interdict lies upon any use at all of that which is confessedly national property? Books and MSS., which were collected originally, and formally bequeathed to the public, under the generous and noble idea of giving to future generations advantages which the collector had himself not enjoyed, and liberating them from obstacles in the pursuit of knowledge which experience had bitterly imprinted upon his own mind, are at this day locked up as absolutely against me, you, or anybody, as collections confessedly private. Nay, far more so; for most private collectors of eminence (as the late Mr. Heber, for instance) have been distinguished for liberality in lending the rarest of their books to those who knew how to use them with effect. But, in the cases I now contemplate, the whole funds for supporting the proper offices attached to a library, such as librarians, sub-librarians, &c., which of themselves (and without the express verbal evidence of the founder's will) presume a *public* in the daily use of the books, else they are superfluous, have been applied to the creation of lazy sinecures in behalf of persons expressly charged with the care of shutting out the public. Therefore, it is true they are *not* sinecures: for that one care, vigilantly to keep out the public,[1] they do take upon themselves; and

[1] This place suggests the mention of another crying abuse connected with this subject. In the year 1811 or 1810 came under parliamentary notice and revision the law of copyright. In some excellent pamphlets drawn forth by the occasion, from Mr. Duppa, for instance, and several others, the whole subject was well probed, and many aspects, little noticed by the public, were exposed of that extreme injustice attached to the law as it then stood. The several monopolies connected with books were noticed a *little;* and *not* a little notice was taken of the oppressive privilege with which certain public libraries (at that time, I think, eleven) were invested, of exacting, severally, a copy of each new book published. This downright robbery was palliated by some members of the House in that day, under the notion of its being a sort of exchange, or *quid pro quo* in return for the relief obtained by the statute of Queen Anne—the first which

why? A man loving books, like myself, might suppose that their motive was the ungenerous one of keeping the books to themselves. Far from it. In several instances, they will as little use the books as suffer them to be used. And thus

recognised literary property. "For," argued they, "previously to that statute, supposing your book pirated, at common law you could obtain redress only for each copy *proved* to have been sold by the pirate; and that might not be a thousandth part of the actual loss. Now, the statute of Queen Anne granting you a general redress, upon proof that a piracy had been committed, you, the party relieved, were bound to express your sense of this relief by a return made to the public; and the public is here represented by the great endowed libraries of the seven universities, the British Museum," &c. &c. But, *primâ facie*, this was that *selling of justice* which is expressly renounced in Magna Charta: and why were proprietors of copyright, more than other proprietors, to make an "acknowledgment" for their rights? But, supposing *that* just, why, especially, to the given public bodies? Now, for my part, I think that this admits of an explanation: Nine-tenths of the authors in former days lay amongst the class who had received a college education; and most of these in their academic life had benefited largely by old endowments. Giving up, therefore, a small tribute from their copyright, there was some colour of justice in supposing that they were making a slight acknowledgment for past benefits received, and exactly for those benefits which enabled them to appear with any advantage as authors. So, I am convinced, the "*servitude*" first arose, and under this construction; which, even for those days, was often a fiction, but now is generally such. However, be the origin what it may, the ground upon which the public mind in 1811 (that small part of it, at least, which the question attracted) reconciled itself to the abuse was this:—For a trivial wrong, they alleged (but it was then shown that the wrong was not always trivial), one great good is achieved—viz., that all over the kingdom are dispersed eleven great depositories, in which all persons interested may, at all times, be sure of finding one copy of every book published. That *did* seem a great advantage, and a balance in point of utility (if none in point of justice) to the wrong upon which it grew. But now mark the degree in which this balancing advantage is made available. 1. The eleven bodies are not equally careful to exact their copies; that can only be done by retaining an agent in London; and this agent is careless about books of slight money value. 2. Were it otherwise, of what final avail would a perfect set of the year's productions prove to a public not admitted freely to the eleven libraries? 3. But, finally, if they *were* admitted, to what purpose (as regards this particular advantage) under the following custom, which, in some of these eleven libraries (possibly in all), *was*, I well knew, established: annually the principal librarian *weeded* the annual crop of all such books as displeased himself; upon which two questions arise: 1. Upon what principle? 2. With what result?

the whole plans and cares of the good (weighing his motives, I will say of the *pious*) founder have terminated in locking up and sequestering a large collection of books, some being great rarities, in situations where they are not accessible. Had he bequeathed them to the catacombs of Paris or of Naples, he could not have better provided for their virtual extinction. I ask, does no action at common law lie against the promoters of such enormous abuses? Oh, thou fervent reformer —whose fatal tread he that puts his ear to the ground may hear at a distance coming onwards upon *every* road—if too surely thou wilt work for me and others irreparable wrong and suffering, work also for us a little good; this way turn the great hurricanes and levanters of thy wrath; winnow me this chaff; and let us enter at last the garners of pure wheat laid up in elder days for our benefit, and which for two centuries have been closed against our use!

I answer as to the first, that in this *lustration* he went upon no principle at all, but his own caprice, or what he called his own discretion; and accordingly it is a fact known to many as well as myself, that a book, which some people (and certainly not the least meditative of this age) have pronounced the most original work of modern times, was actually amongst the books thus degraded; it was one of those, as the phrase is, tossed "into the basket"; and universally this fate is more likely to befall a work of *original* merit, which disturbs the previous way of thinking and feeling, than one of timid compliance with ordinary models. Secondly, with what result? For the present, the degraded books, having been consigned to the basket, were forthwith consigned to a damp cellar. There, at any rate, they were in no condition to be consulted by the public, being piled up in close bales, and in a place not publicly accessible. But there can be no doubt that, sooner or later, their mouldering condition would be made an argument for selling them. And such, when we trace the operation of this law to its final stage, is the ultimate result of an infringement upon private rights almost unexampled in any other part of our civil economy. That sole beneficial result, for the sake of which some legislators were willing to sanction a wrong, otherwise admitted to be indefensible, is so little protected and secured to the public, that it is first of all placed at the mercy of an agent in London, whose negligence or indifference may defeat the provision altogether (I know a publisher of a splendid botanical work, who told me that, by forbearing to attract notice to it within the statutable time, he saved his eleven copies); and placed at the mercy of a librarian, who (or any one of his successors) may, upon a motive of malice to the author or an impulse of false taste, after all proscribe any part of the books thus dishonourably acquired.

London we left in haste, to keep an engagement of some standing at the Earl Howe's, my friend's grandfather. This great admiral, who had filled so large a station in the public eye, being the earliest among the naval heroes of England in the first war of the Revolution, and the only one of noble birth, I should have been delighted to see; St. Paul's, and its naval monuments to Captain Riou and Captain ——, together with its floating pageantries of conquered flags, having awakened within me, in a form of peculiar solemnity, those patriotic remembrances of past glories which all boys feel so much more vividly than men can do, in whom the sensibility to such impressions is blunted. Lord Howe, however, I was not destined to see; he had died about a year before. Another death there had been, and very recently, in the family, and under circumstances peculiarly startling; and the spirits of the whole house were painfully depressed by that event at the time of our visit. One of the daughters, a younger sister of my friend's mother, had been engaged for some time to a Scottish nobleman, the Earl of Morton, much esteemed by the Royal Family. The day was at length fixed for the marriage; and about a fortnight before that day arrived, some particular dress or ornament was brought to Porters, in which it was designed that the bride should appear at the altar. The fashion as to this point has often varied; but at that time I believe the custom was for bridal parties to be in full dress. The lady, when the dress arrived, was, to all appearance, in good health; but, by one of those unaccountable misgivings which are on record in so many well-attested cases (as that, for example, of Andrew Marvell's father), she said, after gazing for a minute or two at the beautiful dress, firmly and pointedly, "So, then, *that* is my wedding-dress; and it is expected that I shall wear it on the 17th; but I shall *not;* I shall never wear it. On Thursday the 17th I shall be dressed in a shroud!" All present were shocked at such a declaration, which the solemnity of the lady's manner made it impossible to receive as a jest. The countess, her mother, even reproved her with some severity for the words, as an expression of distrust in the goodness of God. The bride-elect made no answer, but by sighing heavily. Within a fortnight all

happened, to the letter, as she had predicted. She was taken suddenly ill; she died about three days before the marriage-day; and was finally dressed in her shroud, according to the natural course of the funeral arrangements, on the morning that was to have been the wedding festival.

Lord Morton, the nobleman thus suddenly and remarkably bereaved of his bride, was the only gentleman who appeared at the dinner table. He took a particular interest in literature; and it was, in fact, through *his* kindness that, for the first time in my life, I found myself somewhat in the situation of a "*lion*." The occasion of Lord Morton's flattering notice was a particular copy of verses which had gained for me a public distinction; not, however, I must own, a very brilliant one; the prize awarded to me being not the first, nor even the second—what on the Continent is called the *accessit*—it was simply the third: and that fact, stated nakedly, might have left it doubtful whether I were to be considered in the light of one honoured or of one stigmatised. However, the judges in this case, with more honesty, or more self-distrust, than belongs to most adjudications of the kind, had printed the first three of the successful essays. Consequently, it was left open to each of the less successful candidates to benefit by any difference of taste amongst their several friends; and *my* friends in particular, with the single and singular exception of my mother, who always thought her own children inferior to other people's, had generally assigned the palm to myself. Lord Morton protested loudly that the case admitted of no doubt; that gross injustice had been done me; and, as the ladies of the family were much influenced by his opinion, I thus came, not only to wear the laurel in their estimation, but also with the advantageous addition of having suffered some injustice. I was not only a victor, but a victor in misfortune.[1]

At this moment, looking back from a distance of fifty years upon those trifles, it may well be supposed that I do not attach so much importance to the subject of my fugitive honours as to have any very decided opinion one way or the other upon my own proportion of merit. I do not even recollect the major part of the verses: that which I *do*

[1] For the facts here referred to, see footnote, *ante*, p. 161.—M.

recollect inclines me to think that, in the structure of the metre, and in the choice of the expressions, I had some advantage over my competitors, though otherwise, perhaps, my verses were less finished ; Lord Morton might, therefore, in a partial sense, have been just as well as kind. But, little as that may seem likely, even then, and at the moment of reaping some advantage from my honours, which gave me a consideration with the family I was amongst such as I could not else have had, most unaffectedly I doubted in my own mind whether I were really entitled to the praises which I received. My own verses had not at all satisfied myself ; and, though I felt elated by the notice they had gained me, and gratified by the generosity of the earl in taking my part so warmly, I was so more in a spirit of sympathy with the kindness thus manifested in my behalf, and with the consequent kindness which it procured me from others, than from any incitement or support which it gave to my intellectual pride.[1] In fact, whatever estimate I might make of those intellectual gifts which I believed or which I knew myself to possess, I was inclined, even in those days, to doubt whether my natural vocation lay towards poetry. Well, indeed, I knew, and I know that, had I chosen to enlist amongst the *soi-disant* poets of the day—amongst those, I mean, who by mere force of *talent* and mimetic skill contrive to sustain the part of poet in a scenical sense, and with a scenical effect—I also could have won such laurels as are won by such merit ; I also could have taken and sustained a place *taliter qualiter* amongst the poets of the time. Why *not* then ? Simply because I knew that me, as them, would await the certain destiny in reversion of resigning that place in the next generation to some younger candidate having equal or greater skill in appropriating the vague sentiments and old traditionary language of passion spread through books, but having also the advantage of novelty, and of a closer adaptation to the prevailing taste of the day. Even at that early age I was keenly alive, if not so keenly as at this moment, to the

[1] Any reader who may feel specially interested in these juvenile verses of De Quincey will find a reprint of them appended to Mr. Garnett's 1885 edition of the *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*. —M.

fact that by far the larger proportion of what is received in every age for poetry, and for a season usurps that consecrated name, is *not* the spontaneous overflow of real unaffected passion, deep, and at the same time original, and also forced into public manifestation of itself from the necessity which cleaves to all passion alike of seeking external sympathy: this it is *not;* but a counterfeit assumption of such passion, according to the more or less accurate skill of the writer in distinguishing the key of passion suited to the particular age; and a concurrent assumption of the language of passion according to his more or less skill in separating the spurious from the native and legitimate diction of genuine emotion. Rarely, indeed, are the reputed poets of any age men who groan, like prophets, under the burden of a message which they have to deliver, and *must* deliver, of a mission which they *must* discharge. Generally—nay, with much fewer exceptions, perhaps, than would be readily believed—they are merely simulators of the part they sustain; speaking not out of the abundance of their own hearts, but by skill and artifice assuming or personating emotions at second-hand; and the whole is a business of talent (sometimes even of great talent), but not of original power, of genius,[1] or authentic inspiration.

[1] The words *genius* and *talent* are frequently distinguished from each other by those who evidently misconstrue the true distinction entirely, and sometimes so grossly, as to use them by way of expressions for a mere difference in *degree*. Thus, "a man of great talent, absolutely a *genius*," occurs in a very well-written tale at this moment before me; as if being a man of genius implied only a greater than ordinary degree of talent.

Talent and *genius* are in no one point allied to each other, except generically—that both express modes of intellectual power. But the kinds of power are not merely different, they are in polar opposition to each other. *Talent* is intellectual power of every kind, which acts and manifests itself by and through the *will* and the *active* forces. *Genius*, as the verbal origin implies, is that much rarer species of intellectual power which is derived from the *genial* nature—from the spirit of suffering and enjoying—from the spirit of pleasure and pain, as organised more or less perfectly; and this is independent of the will. It is a function of the *passive* nature. Talent is conversant with the adaptation of means to ends. But genius is conversant only with ends. Talent has no sort of connection, not the most remote or shadowy, with the *moral* nature or temperament—genius is steeped and saturated with this moral nature.

From Porters, after a few days' visit, we returned to Eton. Her Majesty about this time gave some splendid fêtes at Frogmore, to one or two of which she had directed that we should be invited. The invitation was, of course, on my friend's account ; but her majesty had condescended to direct that I, as his visitor, should be specially included. Lord Westport, young as he was, had become tolerably indifferent about such things ; but to me such a scene was a novelty ; and, on that account, it was settled we should go as early as was permissible. We *did* go : and I was not sorry to have had the gratification of witnessing (if it were but for once or twice) the splendours of a royal party. But, after the first edge of expectation was taken off, after the vague uncertainties of rustic ignorance had given place to absolute realities, and the eye had become a little familiar with the flashing of the

This was written twenty years ago. Now (1853), when revising it, I am tempted to add three brief annotations :—

1. It scandalises me that, in the occasional comments upon this distinction which have reached my eye, no attention should have been paid to the profound suggestions as to the radix of what is meant by *genius* latent in the word *genial*. For instance, in an extract made by "The Leader," a distinguished literary journal, from a recent work entitled "Poetics," by Mr. Dallas, there is not the slightest notice taken of this subtle indication and leading towards the truth. Yet surely *that* is hardly philosophic. For could Mr. Dallas suppose that the idea involved in the word *genial* had no connection, or none but an accidental one, with the idea involved in the word *genius* ? It is clear that from the Roman conception (whencesoever emanating) of the natal Genius, as the secret and central representative of what is most characteristic and individual in the nature of every human being, are derived alike the notion of the *genial* and our modern notion of *genius* as contradistinguished from *talent*.

2. As another broad character of distinction between *genius* and *talent*, I would observe—that *genius* differentiates a man from all other men ; whereas *talent* is the same in one man as in another : that is, where it exists at all, it is the mere echo and reflex of the same talent, as seen in thousands of other men, differing only by more and less, but not at all in quality. In genius, on the contrary, no two men were ever duplicates of each other.

3. All talent, in whatsoever class, reveals itself as an effort—as a counteraction to an opposing difficulty or hindrance ; whereas genius universally moves in headlong sympathy and concurrence with spontaneous power. Talent works universally by intense resistance to an antagonist force, whereas genius works under a rapture of necessity and spontaneity.

jewellery, I began to suffer under the constraints incident to a young person in such a situation—the situation, namely, of sedentary passiveness, where one is acted upon, but does not act. The music, in fact, was all that continued to delight me; and, but for *that*, I believe I should have had some difficulty in avoiding so monstrous an indecorum as yawning. I revise this faulty expression, however, on the spot: not the music only it was, but the music combined with the dancing, that so deeply impressed me. The ball-room—a temporary erection, with something of the character of a pavilion about it—wore an elegant and festal air; the part allotted to the dancers being fenced off by a gilded lattice-work, and ornamented beautifully from the upper part with drooping festoons of flowers. But all the luxury that spoke to the eye merely faded at once by the side of impassioned dancing, sustained by impassioned music. Of all the scenes which this world offers, none is to me so profoundly interesting, none (I say it deliberately) so affecting, as the spectacle of men and women floating through the mazes of a dance; under these conditions, however, that the music shall be rich, resonant, and festal, the execution of the dancers perfect, and the dance itself of a character to admit of free, fluent, and *continuous* motion. But this last condition will be sought vainly in the quadrilles, &c., which have for so many years banished the truly beautiful *country-dances* native to England. Those whose taste and sensibility were so defective as to substitute for the *beautiful* in dancing the merely *difficult*, were sure, in the end, to transfer the depravations of this art from the opera-house to the floors of private ball-rooms. The tendencies even then were in that direction: but as yet they had not attained their final stage: and the English country-dance [1] was still in estimation at the courts

[1] This word, I am well aware, grew out of the French word *contre-danse;* indicating the regular contraposition of male and female partners in the first arrangement of the dancers. The word *country-dance* was therefore originally a corruption; but, having once arisen and taken root in the language, it is far better to retain it in its colloquial form: better, I mean, on the general principle concerned in such cases. For it is, in fact, by such corruptions, by offsets upon an old stock, arising through ignorance or mispronunciation originally, that every language is frequently enriched; and new modifications of thought, unfolding

of princes. Now, of all dances, this is the only one, as a class, of which you can truly describe the motion to be *continuous*—that is, not interrupted or fitful, but unfolding its fine mazes with the equability of light in its diffusion through free space. And wherever the music happens to be not of a light, trivial character, but charged with the spirit of festal pleasure, and the performers in the dance so far skilful as to betray no awkwardness verging on the ludicrous, I believe that many people feel as I feel in such circumstances—viz., derive from the spectacle the very grandest form of passionate sadness which can belong to any spectacle whatsoever. *Sadness* is not the exact word; nor is there *any* word in any language (because none in the finest languages) which exactly expresses the state; since it is not a depressing, but a most elevating state to which I allude. And, certainly, it is easy to understand, that many states of pleasure, and in particular the highest, are the most of all removed from merriment. The day on which a Roman triumphed was the most gladsome day of his existence; it was the crown and consummation of his prosperity; yet assuredly it was also to him the most solemn of his days. Festal music, of a rich and passionate character, is the most remote of any from vulgar hilarity. Its very gladness and pomp is impregnated with

themselves in the progress of society, generate for themselves concurrently appropriate expressions. Many words in the Latin can be pointed out as having passed through this process. It must not be allowed to weigh against the validity of a word once fairly naturalised by use, that originally it crept in upon an abuse or a corruption. *Prescription* is as strong a ground of legitimation in a case of this nature as it is in law. And the old axiom is applicable—*Fieri non debuit, factum valet.* Were it otherwise, languages would be robbed of much of their wealth. And, universally, the class of *purists*, in matters of language, are liable to grievous suspicion, as almost constantly proceeding on *half* knowledge and on insufficient principles. For example, if I have read one, I have read twenty letters, addressed to newspapers, denouncing the name of a great quarter in London, *Mary-le-bone*, as ludicrously ungrammatical. The writers had learned (or were learning) French; and they had thus become aware that neither the article nor the adjective was right. True, not right for the current age, but perfectly right for the age in which the name arose: but, for want of elder French, they did not know that in our Chaucer's time both were right. *Le* was then the article feminine as well as masculine, and *bone* was then the true form for the adjective.

sadness; but sadness of a grand and aspiring order. Let, for instance (since without individual illustrations there is the greatest risk of being misunderstood), any person of musical sensibility listen to the exquisite music composed by Beethoven, as an opening for Bürger's "Lenore," the running idea of which is the triumphal return of a crusading host, decorated with laurels and with palms, within the gates of their native city; and then say whether the presiding feeling, in the midst of this tumultuous festivity, be not, by infinite degrees, transcendent to anything so vulgar as hilarity. In fact, laughter itself is of all things the most equivocal;—as the organ of the ludicrous, laughter is allied to the trivial and the mean; as the organ of joy, it is allied to the passionate and the noble. From all which the reader may comprehend, if he should not happen experimentally to have felt, that a spectacle of young men and women *flowing* through the mazes of an intricate dance under a full volume of music, taken with all the circumstantial adjuncts of such a scene in rich men's halls—the blaze of lights and jewels, the life, the motion, the sea-like undulation of heads, the interweaving of the figures, the ανακυκλησις or self-revolving, both of the dance and the music, "never ending, still beginning," and the continual regeneration of order from a system of motions which for ever touch the very brink of confusion—that such a spectacle, with such circumstances, may happen to be capable of exciting and sustaining the very grandest emotions of philosophic melancholy to which the human spirit is open. The reason is, in part, that such a scene presents a sort of mask of human life, with its whole equipage of pomps and glories, its luxury of sight and sound, its hours of golden youth, and the interminable revolution of ages hurrying after ages, and one generation treading upon the flying footsteps of another; whilst all the while the overruling music attempers the mind to the spectacle, the subject to the object, the beholder to the vision. And although this is known to be but one phasis of life—of life culminating and in ascent—yet the other (and repulsive) phasis is concealed upon the hidden or averted side of the golden arras, known but not felt: or is seen but dimly in the rear, crowding into indistinct proportions. The effect of the music is to place the

mind in a state of elective attraction for everything in harmony with its own prevailing key.

This pleasure, as always on similar occasions, I had at present; but naturally in a degree corresponding to the circumstances of *royal* splendour through which the scene revolved; and, if I have spent rather more words than should reasonably have been requisite in describing any obvious state of emotion, it is not because, in itself, it is either vague or doubtful, but because it is difficult, without calling upon a reader for a little reflection, to convince him that there is not something paradoxical in the assertion, that joy and festal pleasure, of the highest kind, are liable to a *natural* combination with solemnity, or even with melancholy the most profound. Yet, to speak in the mere simplicity of truth, so mysterious is human nature, and so little to be read by him who runs, that almost every weighty aspect of truth upon that theme will be found at first sight to be startling, or sometimes paradoxical. And so little need is there for chasing or courting paradox, that, on the contrary, he who is faithful to his own experiences will find all his efforts little enough to keep down the paradoxical air besieging much of what he *knows* to be the truth. No man needs to *search* for paradox in this world of ours. Let him simply confine himself to the truth, and he will find paradox growing everywhere under his hands as rank as weeds. For new truths of importance are rarely agreeable to any preconceived theories —that is, cannot be explained by these theories; which are insufficient, therefore, even where they are true. And universally it must be borne in mind—that not *that* is paradox which, seeming to be true, is upon examination false, but that which, seeming to be false, may upon examination be found true.[1]

The pleasure of which I have been speaking belongs to

[1] And therefore it was with strict propriety that Boyle, anxious to fix public attention upon some truths of hydrostatics, published them avowedly as *paradoxes*. According to the false popular notion of what it is that constitutes a paradox, Boyle should be taken to mean that these hydrostatic theorems were fallacies. But far from it. Boyle solicits attention to these propositions—not as seeming to be true and turning out false; but, reversely, as wearing an air of falsehood and turning out true.

all such scenes ; but on this particular occasion there was also something more. To see persons in "the body" of whom you have been reading in newspapers from the very earliest of your reading days—those, who have hitherto been great *ideas* in your childish thoughts, to see and to hear moving and talking as carnal existences amongst other human beings—had, for the first half-hour or so, a singular and strange effect. But this naturally waned rapidly, after it had once begun to wane. And when these first startling impressions of novelty had worn off, it must be confessed that the peculiar circumstances attaching to a royal ball were not favourable to its joyousness or genial spirit of enjoyment. I am not going to repay her majesty's condescension so ill, or so much to abuse the privileges of a guest, as to draw upon my recollections of what passed for the materials of a cynical critique. Everything was done, I doubt not, which court etiquette permitted, to thaw those ungenial restraints which gave to the whole too much of a ceremonial and official character, and to each actor in the scene gave too much of the air belonging to one who is discharging a duty, and to the youngest even among the principal personages concerned gave an apparent anxiety and jealousy of manner—jealousy, I mean, not of others, but a prudential jealousy of his own possible oversights or trespasses. In fact, a great personage bearing a state character cannot be regarded, nor regard himself, with the perfect freedom which belongs to social intercourse ; no, nor ought to be. It is not rank alone which is here concerned : that, as being his own, he might lay aside for an hour or two ; but he bears a representative character also. He has not his own rank only, but the rank of others, to protect : he (supposing him the sovereign, or a prince near to the succession) embodies and impersonates the majesty of a great people ; and this character, were you ever so much encouraged to do so, you, the ἰδιωτης, the *lay* spectator or "assister," neither could nor ought to dismiss from your thoughts. Besides all which, it must be acknowledged, that to see brothers dancing with sisters—as too often occurred in those dances to which the princesses were parties—disturbed the appropriate interest of the scene, being irreconcilable with the allusive meaning of dancing in general, and laid a

weight upon its gaiety which no condescensions from the highest quarter could remove. This infelicitous arrangement forced the thoughts of all present upon the exalted rank of the parties which could dictate and exact so unusual an assortment. And that rank, again, it presented to us under one of its least happy aspects; as insulating a blooming young woman amidst the choir of her co-evals, and surrounding her with dreadful solitude amidst a vast crowd of the young, the brave, the beautiful, and the accomplished.

Meantime, as respected myself individually, I had reason to be grateful: every kindness and attention were shown to me. My invitation I was sensible that I owed entirely to my noble friend. But, *having* been invited, I felt assured, from what passed, that it was meant and provided that I should not, by any possibility, be suffered to think myself overlooked. Lord Westport and I communicated our thoughts occasionally by means of a language which we, in those days, found useful enough at times, and which bore the name of *Ziph*. The language and the name were both derived (that is, were *immediately* so derived; for *remotely* the Ziph language may ascend to Nineveh) from Winchester. Dr. Mapleton, a physician in Bath, who attended me in concert with Mr. Grant, an eminent surgeon, during the nondescript malady of the head, happened to have had three sons at Winchester; and his reason for removing them is worth mentioning, as it illustrates the well-known system of *fagging*. One or more of them showed to the quick medical eye of Dr. Mapleton symptoms of declining health; and, upon cross-questioning, he found that, being (as juniors) *fags* (that is, bondsmen by old prescription) to appointed seniors, they were under the necessity of going out nightly into the town, for the purpose of executing commissions; but this was not easy, as all the regular outlets were closed at an early hour. In such a dilemma, any route, that was barely practicable at whatever risk, must be traversed by the loyal fag; and it so happened that none of any kind remained open or accessible, except one; and this one communication happened to have escaped suspicion, simply because it lay through a succession of temples and sewers sacred to the

goddesses Cloacina and Scavengerina. That of itself was not so extraordinary a fact: the wonder lay in the number—viz., seventeen. Such were the actual amount of sacred edifices, which, through all their dust, and garbage, and mephitic morasses, these miserable vassals had to thread all *but* every night of the week. Dr. Mapleton, when he had made this discovery, ceased to wonder at the medical symptoms; and, as *faggery* was an abuse too venerable and sacred to be touched by profane hands, he lodged no idle complaints, but simply removed his sons to a school where the Serbonian bogs of the subterraneous goddess might not intersect the nocturnal line of march so *very* often. One day, during the worst of my illness, when the kind-hearted doctor was attempting to amuse me with this anecdote, and asking me whether I thought Hannibal would have attempted his march over the Little St. Bernard, supposing that he and the elephant which he rode had been summoned to explore a route through seventeen similar nuisances, he went on to mention the one sole accomplishment which his sons had imported from Winchester. This was the *Ziph* language, communicated at Winchester to any aspirant for a fixed fee of one half-guinea, but which the doctor then communicated to me—as I do now to the reader—*gratis*. I make a present of this language without fee, or price, or entrance-money, to my honoured reader; and let him understand that it is undoubtedly a bequest of elder times. Perhaps it may be co-eval with the Pyramids. For in the famous "Essay on a Philosophical Character" (I forget whether *that* is the exact title), a large folio written by the ingenious Dr. Wilkins, bishop of Chester,[1] and published early in the reign of Charles II, a folio which I, in youthful days, not only read but studied, this language is recorded and accurately described amongst many other modes of cryptical communication, oral and visual, spoken, written, or symbolic. And, as the bishop does not speak of it as at all a *recent* invention, it

[1] This Dr. Wilkins was related by marriage to Cromwell, and is better known to the world, perhaps, by his Essay on the possibility of a passage (or, as the famous author of the "Pursuits of Literature" said, by way of an Episcopal metaphor, the possibility of a *translation*) to the moon.

may probably at that time have been regarded as an antique device for conducting a conversation in secrecy amongst by-standers; and this advantage it has, that it is applicable to all languages alike; nor can it possibly be penetrated by one not initiated in the mystery. The secret is this (and the grandeur of simplicity at any rate it has)—repeat the vowel or diphthong of every syllable, prefixing to the vowel so repeated the letter G. Thus, for example:—Shall we go away in an hour? Three hours we have already staid. This in Ziph becomes:—*Shagall wege gogo agawagay igin agan hougour? Threegee hougours wege hagave agalreageadygy stagaid.*[1] It must not be supposed that Ziph proceeds slowly. A very little practice gives the greatest fluency; so that even now, though certainly I cannot have practised it for fifty years, my power of speaking the Ziph remains unimpaired. I forget whether in the Bishop of Chester's account of this cryptical language the consonant intercalated be G or not. Evidently any consonant will answer the purpose. F or L would be softer, and so far better.

In this learned tongue it was that my friend and I communicated our feelings; and having staid nearly four hours, a time quite sufficient to express a proper sense of the honour, we departed; and, on emerging into the open high-road, we threw up our hats and huzzaed, meaning no sort of disrespect, but from uncontrollable pleasure in recovered liberty.

Soon after this we left Eton for Ireland. Our first destination being Dublin, of course we went by Holyhead. The route at that time, from Southern England to Dublin, did not (as in elder and in later days) go round by Chester. A few miles after leaving Shrewsbury, somewhere about Oswestry, it entered North Wales; a stage farther brought us to the celebrated vale of Llangollen; and, on reaching the approach to this about sunset on a beautiful evening of June, I first found myself amongst the mountains; a feature in natural scenery for which, from my earliest days, it was not ex-

[1] One omission occurs to me on reviewing this account of the Ziph —which is, that I should have directed the accent to be placed on the intercalated syllable: thus *ship* becomes *shigip*, with the emphasis on *gip*; *run* becomes *rugún*, &c.

travagant to say that I had hungered and thirsted. In no one expectation of my life have I been less disappointed; and I may add, that no one enjoyment has less decayed or palled upon my continued experience. A mountainous region, with a slender population, and *that* of a simple pastoral character; behold my chief conditions of a pleasant permanent dwelling-place! But, thus far I have altered, that *now* I should greatly prefer forest scenery—such as the New Forest, or the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire. The mountains of Wales range at about the same elevation as those of Northern England; three thousand and four to six hundred feet being the extreme limit which they reach. Generally speaking, their forms are less picturesque individually, and they are less happily grouped than their English brethren. I have since also been made sensible by Wordsworth of one grievous defect in the structure of the Welsh valleys; too generally they take the *basin* shape—the level area at their foot does not detach itself with sufficient precision from the declivities that surround them. Of this, however, I was not aware at the time of first seeing Wales; although the striking effect from the *opposite* form of the Cumberland and Westmoreland valleys, which almost universally present a flat area at the base of the surrounding hills, level, to use Wordsworth's expression, "*as the floor of a temple*," would, at any rate, have arrested my eye, as a circumstance of impressive beauty, even though the want of such a feature might not, in any case, have affected me as a fault. As something that had a positive value, this characteristic of the Cumbrian valleys had fixed my attention, but not as any telling point of contrast against the Cambrian valleys. No faults, however, at that early age disturbed my pleasure, except that, after one whole day's travelling (for so long it cost us between Llangollen and Holyhead), the want of water struck me upon review as painfully remarkable. From Conway to Bangor (seventeen miles), we were often in sight of the sea; but fresh water we had seen hardly any; no lake, no stream much beyond a brook. This is certainly a conspicuous defect in North Wales, considered as a region of fine scenery. The few lakes I have since become acquainted with, as that near Bala, near Beddkelert, and beyond Machynleth, are not attractive either in

their forms or in their accompaniments: the Bala Lake being meagre and insipid: the others as it were unfinished, and unaccompanied with their furniture of wood.

At the *Head* (to call it by its common colloquial name) we were detained a few days in those unsteaming times by foul winds. Our time, however, thanks to the hospitality of a certain Captain Skinner on that station, did not hang heavy on our hands, though we were imprisoned, as it were, on a dull rock; for Holyhead itself is a little island of rock, an insulated dependency of Anglesea; which, again, is a little insulated dependency of North Wales. The packets on this station were at that time lucrative commands; and they were given (perhaps *are*[1] given) to post-captains in the navy. Captain Skinner was celebrated for his convivial talents; he did the honours of the place in a hospitable style; daily asked us to dine with him, and seemed as inexhaustible in his wit as in his hospitality.

This answered one purpose, at least, of special convenience to our party at that moment: it kept us from all necessity of meeting each other during the day, except under circumstances where we escaped the necessity of any familiar communication. Why that should have become desirable arose upon the following mysterious change of relations between ourselves and the Rev. Mr. Gr——, Lord Westport's tutor. On the last day of our journey, Mr. G., who had accompanied us thus far, but now at Holyhead was to leave us, suddenly took offence (or, at least, then first *showed* his offence) at something we had said, done, or omitted, and never spoke one syllable to either of us again. Being both of us amiably disposed, and incapable of having seriously meditated either word or deed likely to wound any person's feelings, we were much hurt at the time, and often retraced the little incidents upon the road, to discover, if possible, what it was that had laid us open to misconstruction. But it remained to both of us a lasting mystery. This tutor was an Irishman, of Trinity College, Dublin; and, I believe, of considerable pretensions as a scholar; but, being reserved and haughty, or else presuming in us a knowledge of our offence, which we really had not, he gave us no opening for any explanation.

[1] Written twenty years ago.

To the last moment, however, he manifested a punctilious regard to the duties of his charge. He accompanied us in our boat, on a dark and gusty night, to the packet, which lay a little out at sea. He saw us on board; and then, standing up for one moment, he said, "Is all right on deck?"—"All right, sir," sang out the ship's steward.—"Have you, Lord Westport, got your boat-cloak with you?"—"Yes, sir."—"Then pull away, boatmen." We listened for a time to the measured beat of his retreating oars, marvelling more and more at the atrocious nature of our crime which could thus avail to intercept even his last adieus. I, for my part, never saw him again; nor, as I have reason to think, did Lord Westport. Neither did we ever unravel the mystery.

As if to irritate our curiosity still more, Lord Westport showed me a torn fragment of paper in his tutor's hand-writing, which, together with others, had been thrown (as he believed) purposely in his way. If he was right in that belief, it appeared that he had missed the particular fragment which was designed to raise the veil upon our guilt; for the one he produced contained exactly these words:—"With respect to your ladyship's anxiety to know how far the acquaintance with Mr. de Q. is likely to be of service to your son, I think I may now venture to say that——" There the sibylline fragment ended; nor could we torture it into any further revelation. However, both of us saw the propriety of not ourselves practising any mystery, nor giving any advantage to Mr. G. by imperfect communications; and accordingly, on the day after we reached Dublin, we addressed a circumstantial account of our journey and our little mystery to Lady Altamont in England; for to her it was clear that the tutor had confided his mysterious wrongs. Her ladyship answered with kindness; but did not throw any light on the problem which exercised at once our memories, our skill in conjectural interpretation, and our sincere regrets. Lord Westport and I regretted much that there had not been a wider margin attached to the fragment of Mr. G.'s letter to Lady Altamont; in which case, as I could readily have mimicked his style of writing, it would have been easy for me to fill up thus:—"With respect to your ladyship's anxiety, &c., I think I may now venture to say that, if the solar system were

searched, there could not be found a companion more serviceable to your son than Mr. de Q. He speaks the Ziph most beautifully. He writes it, I am told, classically. And if there were a Ziph nation as well as a Ziph language, I am satisfied that he would very soon be at the head of it; as he already is, beyond all competition, at the head of the Ziph literature." Lady Altamont, on receiving this, would infallibly have supposed him mad; she would have written so to all her Irish friends, and would have commended the poor gentleman to the care of his nearest kinsmen; and thus we should have had some little indemnification for the annoyance he had caused us. I mention this trifle, simply because, trifle as it is, it involved a mystery, and furnishes an occasion for glancing at that topic. Mysteries as deep, with results a little more important and foundations a little sounder, have many times crossed me in life; one, for instance, I recollect at this moment, known pretty extensively to the neighbourhood in which it occurred. It was in the county of S——. A lady married, and married well, as was thought. About twelve months afterwards, she returned alone in a post-chaise to her father's house; paid, and herself dismissed, the postilion at the gate; entered the house; ascended to the room in which she had passed her youth, and known in the family by her name; took possession of it again; intimated by signs, and by one short letter at her first arrival, what she would require; lived for nearly twenty years in this state of *La Trappe* seclusion and silence; nor ever, to the hour of her death, explained what circumstances had dissolved the supposed happy connection she had formed, or what had become of her husband. Her looks and gestures were of a nature to repress all questions in the spirit of mere curiosity; and the spirit of affection naturally respected a secret which was guarded so severely. This might be supposed a Spanish tale; yet it happened in England, and in a pretty populous neighbourhood. The romances which occur in real life are too often connected with circumstances of criminality in some one among the parties concerned; on that account, more than any other, they are often suppressed; else, judging by the number which have fallen within my own knowledge, they must be of more frequent occurrence than is usually supposed.

Among such romances, those cases, perhaps, form an unusual proportion in which young, innocent, and high-minded persons have made a sudden discovery of some great profligacy or deep unworthiness in the person to whom they had surrendered their entire affections. That shock, more than any other, is capable of blighting, in one hour, the whole after existence, and sometimes of at once overthrowing the balance of life or of reason. Instances I have known of both; and such afflictions are the less open to any alleviation, that sometimes they are of a nature so delicate as to preclude all confidential communication of them to another; and sometimes it would be even dangerous, in a legal sense, to communicate them.

A sort of adventure occurred, and not of a kind pleasant to recall, even on this short voyage. The passage to Dublin from the Head is about sixty miles, I believe; yet, from baffling winds, it cost us upwards of thirty hours. On the second day, going upon deck, we found that our only fellow-passenger of note was a woman of rank, celebrated for her beauty; and not undeservedly; for a lovely creature she was. The body of her travelling coach had been, as usual, unslung from the "carriage" (by which is technically meant the wheels and the perch), and placed upon deck. This she used as a place of retreat from the sun during the day, and as a resting-place at night. For want of more interesting companions, she invited us, during the day, into her coach; and we taxed our abilities to make ourselves as entertaining as we could; for we were greatly fascinated by the lady's beauty. The second night proved very sultry; and Lord Westport and myself, suffering from the oppression of the cabin, left our berths, and lay, wrapped up in cloaks, upon deck. Having talked for some hours, we were both on the point of falling asleep, when a stealthy tread near our heads awoke us. It was starlight; and we traced between ourselves and the sky the outline of a man's figure. Lying upon a mass of tarpaulins, we were ourselves undistinguishable, and the figure moved in the direction of the coach. Our first thought was to raise an alarm, scarcely doubting that the purpose of the man was to rob the unprotected lady of her watch or purse. But, to our astonishment, we saw the

coach-door silently swing open under a touch from *within*. All was as silent as a dream; the figure entered, the door closed, and we were left to interpret the case as we might. Strange it was that this lady could permit herself to calculate upon absolute concealment in such circumstances. We recollected afterwards to have heard some indistinct rumour buzzed about the packet on the day preceding, that a gentleman, and some even spoke of him by name as a Colonel ——, for some unknown purpose, was concealed in the steerage of the packet. And other appearances indicated that the affair was not entirely a secret even amongst the lady's servants. To both of *us* the story proclaimed a moral already sufficiently current—viz., that women of the highest and the very lowest rank are alike thrown too much into situations of danger and temptation. I might mention some additional circumstances of criminal aggravation in this lady's case; but, as they would tend to point out the real person to those acquainted with her history, I shall forbear. She has since made a noise in the world, and has maintained, I believe, a tolerably fair reputation. Soon after sunrise the next morning, a heavenly morning of June, we dropped our anchor in the famous bay of Dublin. There was a dead calm: the sea was like a lake; and, as we were some miles from the Pigeon-House, a boat was manned to put us on shore. The lovely lady, unaware that we were parties to her guilty secret, went with us, accompanied by her numerous attendants, and looking as beautiful, and hardly less innocent than an angel. Long afterwards, Lord Westport and I met her, hanging upon the arm of her husband, a manly and good-natured man, of polished manners, to whom she introduced us: for she voluntarily challenged us as her fellow-voyagers, and, I suppose, had no suspicion which pointed in our direction. She even joined her husband in cordially pressing us to visit them at their magnificent *chateau*. Upon us, meantime, whatever might be *her* levity, the secret of which accident had put us in possession pressed with a weight of awe; we shuddered at our own discovery; and we both agreed to drop no hint of it in any direction.[1]

[1] Lord Westport's age at that time was the same as my own—that is, we both wanted a few months of being fifteen [a mis-recollection:

Landing about three miles from Dublin (according to my present remembrance, at Dunleary), we were not long in reaching Sackville Street.

see footnote, *ante*, p. 162.—M.] But I had the advantage, perhaps, in thoughtfulness and observation of life. Being thoroughly free, however, from opinionativeness, Lord Westport readily came over to any views of mine for which I could show sufficient grounds. And on this occasion I found no difficulty in convincing him—that honour and fidelity did not form sufficient guarantees for the custody of secrets. Presence of mind so as to revive one's obligations in time, tenacity of recollection, and vigilance over one's own momentary slips of tongue, so as to keep watch over indirect disclosures, are also requisite. And at that time I had an instance within my own remembrance where a secret had been betrayed by a person of undoubted honour, but most inadvertently betrayed, and in pure oblivion of his engagement to silence. Indeed, unless where the secret is of a nature to affect some person's life, I do not believe that most people would remember beyond a period of two years the most solemn obligations to secrecy. After a lapse of time, varying of course with the person, the substance of the secret will remain upon the mind: but how he came by the secret, or under what circumstances, he will very probably have forgotten. It is unsafe to rely upon the most religious or sacramental obligation to secrecy, unless, together with the secret, you could transfer also a magic ring that should, by a growing pressure or puncture, *sting* a man into timely alarm and warning.

CHAPTER IX

DUBLIN [1]

In Sackville Street stood the town-house of Lord Altamont; and here, in the breakfast-room, we found the earl seated. Long and intimately as I had known Lord Westport, it so happened that I had never seen his father, who had, indeed, of late almost pledged himself to a continued residence in Ireland by his own patriotic earnestness as an agricultural improver; whilst for his son, under the difficulties and delays at that time of all travelling, any residence whatever in England seemed preferable, but especially a residence with his mother amongst the relatives of his distinguished English grandfather, and in such close neighbourhood to Eton. Lord Altamont once told me, that the journey outward and inward between Eton and Westport, taking into account all the unavoidable deviations from the direct route, in compliance with the claims of kinship, &c. (a case which in Ireland forced a traveller often into a perpetual zig-zag), counted up to something more than a thousand miles. That is, in effect, when valued in loss of time, and allowance being made for the want of *continuity* in those parts of the travelling system that did not accurately dovetail into each other, not less than one entire fortnight must be annually sunk upon a labour that yielded no commensurate fruit. Hence the long three-years interval which had

[1] First two paragraphs new; but the rest substantially a reproduction of a portion of De Quincey's autobiographical paper in *Tait's Magazine* for April 1834.—M.

separated father and son: and hence my own nervous apprehension, as we were racing through the suburbs of Dublin, that I should unavoidably lay a freezing restraint upon that re-union to which, after such a separation, both father and son must have looked forward with anticipation so anxious. Such cases of unintentional intrusion are at times inevitable; but, even to the least sensitive, they are always distressing; most of all they are so to the intruder, who in fact feels himself in the odd position of a criminal without a crime. He is in the situation of one who might have happened to be chased by a Bengal tiger (or, say that the tiger were a sheriff's-officer) into the very centre of the Eleusinian mysteries. Do not tease me, my reader, by alleging that there were no sheriff's-officers at Athens or Eleusis. Not many, I admit: but perhaps quite as many as there were of Bengal tigers. In such a case, under whatever compulsion, the man has violated a holy seclusion. He has seen that which he ought *not* to have seen; and he is viewed with horror by the privileged spectators. Should he plead that this was his misfortune, and not his fault, the answer would be—"True: it was your misfortune; we know it; and it is *our* misfortune to be under the necessity of hating you for it." But there was no cause for similar fears at present: so uniformly considerate in his kindness was Lord Altamont. It is true, that Lord Westport, as an only child, and a child to be proud of—for he was at that time rather handsome, and conciliated general goodwill by his engaging manners—was viewed by his father with an anxiety of love that sometimes became almost painful to witness. But this natural self-surrender to a first involuntary emotion Lord Altamont did not suffer to usurp any such lengthened expression as might too painfully have reminded me of being "one too many." One solitary half-minute being paid down as a tribute to the sanctities of the case, his next care was to withdraw me, the stranger, from any oppressive feeling of strangership. And accordingly, so far from realising the sense of being an intruder, in one minute, under his courteous welcome, I had come to feel that, as the companion of his one darling upon earth, me also he comprehended within his paternal regards.

It must have been nine o'clock precisely when we entered the breakfast-room. So much I know by an *à priori* argument, and could wish, therefore, that it had been scientifically important to know it—as important, for instance, as to know the occultation of a star or the transit of Venus to a second. For the urn was at that moment placed on the table ; and though Ireland, as a whole, is privileged to be irregular, yet such was our Sackville Street regularity, that not so much nine o'clock announced this periodic event, as inversely this event announced nine o'clock. And I used to affirm, however shocking it might sound to poor threadbare metaphysicians, incapable of transcendental truths, that not nine o'clock was the cause of revealing the breakfast urn, but, on the contrary, that the revelation of the breakfast urn was the true and secret cause of nine o'clock—a phenomenon which otherwise no candid reader will pretend that he can satisfactorily account for, often as he has known it to come round. The urn was already throwing up its column of fuming mist ; and the breakfast-table was covered with June flowers sent by a lady on the chance of Lord Westport's arrival. It was clear, therefore, that we were expected ; but so we had been for three or four days previously ; and it illustrates the enormous uncertainties of travelling at this closing era of the eighteenth century, that for three or four days more we should have been expected without the least anxiety, in case anything had occurred to detain us on the road. In fact, the possibility of a Holyhead packet being lost had no place in the catalogue of adverse contingencies—not even when calculated by mothers. To come by way of Liverpool or Parkgate, was not without grounds of reasonable fear : I myself had lost acquaintances (schoolboys) on each of those lines of transit. Neither Bristol nor Milford Haven was entirely cloudless in reputation. But from Holyhead only one packet had ever been lost ; and that was in the days of Queen Anne, when I have good reason to think that a villain was on board who hated the Duke of Marlborough : so that this one exceptional case, far from being looked upon as a public calamity, would, of course, be received thankfully, as cleansing the nation from a scamp.

Ireland was still smoking with the embers of rebellion; and Lord Cornwallis, who had been sent expressly to extinguish it, and had won the reputation of having fulfilled this mission with energy and success, was then the Lord-Lieutenant; and at that moment he was regarded with more interest than any other public man. Accordingly I was not sorry when, two mornings after our arrival, Lord Altamont said to us at breakfast, "Now, if you wish to see what I call a great man, go with me this morning, and you shall see Lord Cornwallis; for that man who has given peace both to the East and to the West—taming a tiger in the Mysore that hated England as much as Hannibal hated Rome, and in Ireland pulling up by the roots a French invasion, combined with an Irish insurrection—will always for me rank as a great man." We willingly accompanied the earl to the Phœnix Park, where the Lord-Lieutenant was then residing, and were privately presented to him. I had seen an engraving (celebrated, I believe, in its day) of Lord Cornwallis receiving the young Mysore princes as hostages at Seringapatam; and I knew the outline of his public services. This gave me an additional interest in seeing him: but I was disappointed to find no traces in his manner of the energy and activity I presumed him to possess; he seemed, on the contrary, slow or even heavy, but benevolent and considerate in a degree which won the confidence at once. Him we saw often; for Lord Altamont took us with him wherever and whenever we wished; and me in particular (to whom the Irish leaders of society were as yet entirely unknown by sight) it gratified highly to see persons of historical names—names, I mean, historically connected with the great events of Elizabeth's or Cromwell's era—attending at the Phœnix Park. But the persons whom I remember most distinctly of all whom I was then in the habit of seeing, were Lord Clare, the Chancellor, the late Lord Londonderry (then Castlereagh), at that time the Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Speaker of the House of Commons (Mr. Foster, since, I believe, created Lord Oriel). With the Speaker, indeed, Lord Altamont had more intimate grounds of connection than with any other public man; both being devoted to the encouragement and personal super-

intendence of great agricultural improvements. Both were bent on introducing, through models diffused extensively on their own estates, English husbandry, English improved breeds of cattle, and, where *that* was possible, English capital and skill, into the rural economy of Ireland.

Amongst the splendid spectacles which I witnessed, as the *most* splendid I may mention an Installation of the Knights of St. Patrick. There were six knights installed on this occasion, one of the six being Lord Altamont. He had, no doubt, received his riband as a reward for his parliamentary votes, and especially in the matter of the Union; yet, from all his conversation upon that question, and from the general conscientiousness of his private life, I am convinced that he acted all along upon patriotic motives, and in obedience to his real views (whether right or wrong) of the Irish interests. One chief reason, indeed, which detained us in Dublin, was the necessity of staying for this particular Installation. At one time, Lord Altamont had designed to take his son and myself for the two esquires who attend the new-made knight, according to the ritual of this ceremony; but that plan was laid aside, on learning that the other five knights were to be attended by adults; and thus, from being partakers as actors, my friend and I became simple spectators of this splendid scene, which took place in the Cathedral of St. Patrick. So easily does mere external pomp slip out of the memory, as to all its circumstantial items, leaving behind nothing beyond the general impression, that at this moment I remember no one incident of the whole ceremonial, except that some foolish person laughed aloud as the knights went up with their offerings to the altar; the object of this unfeeling laughter being apparently Lord Altamont, who happened to be lame—a singular instance of levity to exhibit within the walls of such a building, and at the most solemn part of such a ceremony, which to my mind had a threefold grandeur: first, as *symbolic* and shadowy; secondly, as representing the interlacings of chivalry with religion in the highest aspirations of both; thirdly, as *national*—placing the heraldries and military pomps of a people, so memorably faithful to St. Peter's chair, at the foot of the altar. Lord Westport

and I sat with Lord and Lady Castlereagh. They were both young at this time, and both wore an impressive appearance of youthful happiness; neither, happily for their peace of mind, able to pierce that cloud of years, not much more than twenty, which divided them from the day destined in one hour to wreck the happiness of both. We had met both on other occasions; and their conversation, through the course of that day's pomps, was the most interesting circumstance to me, and the one which I remember with most distinctness of all that belonged to the Installation. By the way, one morning, on occasion of some conversation arising about Irish bulls, I made an agreement with Lord Altamont to note down in a memorandum-book everything throughout my stay in Ireland which, to my feeling as an Englishman, should seem to be, or should approach to, a bull. And this day, at dinner, I reported from Lady Castlereagh's conversation what struck me as such. Lord Altamont laughed, and said, "My dear child, I am sorry that it should so happen, for it is bad to stumble at the beginning: your bull is certainly a bull[1]; but *as* certainly Lady Castlereagh is your countrywoman, and not an Irishwoman at all." Lady Castlereagh, it seems, was a daughter of Lord Buckinghamshire; and her maiden name was Lady Emily Hobart.

One other public scene there was about this time in Dublin, to the eye less captivating, but far more so in a moral sense; more significant practically, more burdened with hope and with fear. This was the final ratification of the bill which united Ireland to Great Britain. I do not know that any one public act, or celebration, or solemnity,

[1] The idea of a *bull* is even yet undefined; which is most extraordinary, considering that Miss Edgeworth has applied all her tact and illustrative power to furnish the *matter* for such a definition; and Coleridge all his philosophic subtlety (but in this instance, I think, with a most infelicitous result) to furnish its *form*. But both have been too fastidious in their admission of bulls. Thus, for example, Miss Edgeworth rejects, as no true bull, the common Joe Miller story, that, upon two Irishmen reaching Barnet, and being told that it was still twelve miles to London, one of them remarked, "Ah! just six miles *apace*." This, says Miss E., is no bull, but a sentimental remark on the maxim that friendship divides our pains. Nothing of the kind: Miss Edgeworth cannot have understood it. The bull is a true representative and exemplary specimen of the *genus*.

in my time, did, or could, so much engage my profoundest sympathies. Wordsworth's fine sonnet on the extinction of the Venetian Republic had not then been published, else the last two lines would have expressed my feelings. After admitting that changes had taken place in Venice which in a manner challenged and presumed this last and mortal change, the poet goes on to say that all this long preparation for the event could not break the shock of it. Venice, it is true, had become a shade ; but, after all,

> "Men are we, and must grieve when even the shade
> Of that which once was great has pass'd away."

But here the previous circumstances were far different from those of Venice. *There* we saw a superannuated and paralytic state, sinking at any rate into the grave, and yielding, to the touch of military violence, that only which a brief lapse of years must otherwise have yielded to internal decay. *Here,* on the contrary, we saw a young eagle, rising into power, and robbed prematurely of her natural honours, only because she did not comprehend their value, or because at this great crisis she had no champion. Ireland, in a political sense, was surely then in her youth, considering the prodigious developments she has since experienced in population, and in resources of all kinds.

This great day of UNION had been long looked forward to by me : with some mixed feelings also by my young friend, for he had an Irish heart, and was jealous of whatever appeared to touch the banner of Ireland. But it was not for him to say anything which should seem to impeach his father's patriotism in voting for the Union, and promoting it through his borough influence. Yet oftentimes it seemed to me, when I introduced the subject, and sought to learn from Lord Altamont the main grounds which had reconciled him and other men, anxious for the welfare of Ireland, to a measure which at least robbed her of some splendour, and, above all, robbed her of a name and place amongst the independent states of Europe—that neither father nor son was likely to be displeased should some great popular violence put force upon the recorded will of Parliament, and compel the two Houses to perpetuate themselves. Dolorous

they must of course have looked, in mere consistency ; but I fancied that internally they would have laughed. Lord Altamont, I am certain, believed (as multitudes believed) that Ireland would be bettered by the commercial advantages conceded to her as an integral province of the empire, and would have benefits which, as an independent kingdom, she had not. It is notorious that this expectation was partially realised. But let us ask, Could not a large part of these benefits have been secured to Ireland, remaining as she was ? Were they, in any sense, dependent on the sacrifice of her separate parliament ? For my part, I believe that Mr. Pitt's motive for insisting on a legislative union was, in a small proportion, perhaps, the somewhat elevated desire to connect his own name with the historical changes of the empire ; to have it stamped, not on events so fugitive as those of war and peace, liable to oblivion or eclipse, but on the permanent relations of its integral parts. In a still larger proportion I believe his motive to have been one of pure convenience, the wish to exonerate himself from the intolerable vexation of a double parliament. In a government such as ours, so care-laden at any rate, it is certainly most harassing to have the task of soliciting a measure by management and influence twice over—two trials to organise, two storms of anxiety to face, and two refractory gangs to discipline, instead of one. It must also be conceded that no Treasury influence could *always* avail to prevent injurious collisions between acts of the Irish and the British Parliaments. In Dublin, as in London, the government must lay its account with being occasionally outvoted ; this would be likely to happen peculiarly upon Irish questions. And acts of favour or protection would at times pass on behalf of Irish interests, not only clashing with more general ones of the central government, but indirectly also (through the virtual consolidation of the two islands since the era of steam) opening endless means for evading British acts even within their own separate sphere of operation. On these considerations, even an Irishman must grant that public convenience called for the absorption of all local or provincial supremacies into the central supremacy. And there were two brief arguments which gave weight to those considerations : first, that the

evils likely to arise (and which in France *have* arisen) from what is termed, in modern politics, the principle of *centralisation*, have been for us either evaded or neutralised. The provinces, to the very furthest nook of these "nook-shotten" islands, react upon London as powerfully as London acts upon *them*, so that no counterpoise is required with us, as in France it is, to any inordinate influence at the centre. Secondly, the very pride and jealousy which could avail to dictate the retention of an independent parliament would effectually preclude any modern "Poynings' Act," having for its object to prevent the collision of the local with the central government. Each would be supreme within its own sphere, and those spheres could not but clash. The separate Irish Parliament was originally no badge of honour or independence: it began in motives of convenience, or perhaps necessity, at a period when the communication was difficult, slow, and interrupted. Any parliament which arose on that footing it was possible to guard by a Poynings' Act, making, in effect, all laws null which should happen to contradict the supreme or central will. But what law, in a corresponding temper, could avail to limit the jurisdiction of a parliament which confessedly had been retained on a principle of national honour? Upon every consideration, therefore, of convenience, and were it only for the necessities of public business, the absorption of the local into the central parliament had now come to speak a language that perhaps could no longer be evaded; and *that* Irishman only could consistently oppose the measure who should take his stand upon principles transcending convenience; looking, in fact, singly to the honour and dignity of a country which it was annually becoming less absurd to suppose capable of an independent existence.

Meantime, in those days, Ireland had no adequate champion: the Hoods and the Grattans were not up to the mark. Refractory as they were, they moved within the paling of order and decorum; they were not the Titans for a war against the heavens. When the public feeling beckoned and loudly supported them, they could follow a lead which they appeared to head; but they could not create such a body of public feeling; nor, when created,

could they throw it into a suitable organisation. What they could do was simply as ministerial agents and rhetoricians to prosecute any general movement, when the national arm had cloven a channel, and opened the road before them. Consequently, that great opening for a turbulent son of thunder passed unimproved; and the great day drew near without symptoms of tempest. At last it arrived; and I remember nothing which indicated as much ill-temper in the public mind as I have seen on many hundreds of occasions, trivial by comparison, in London. Lord Westport and I were determined to lose no part of the scene, and we went down with Lord Altamont to the House. It was about the middle of the day, and a great mob filled the whole space about the two Houses. As Lord Altamont's coach drew up to the steps of that splendid edifice, we heard a prodigious hissing and hooting; and I was really agitated to think that Lord Altamont, whom I loved and respected, would probably have to make his way through a tempest of public wrath—a situation more terrific to him than to others, from his embarrassed walking. I found, however, that I might have spared my anxiety; the subject of commotion was, simply, that Major Sirr, or Major Swan, I forget which (both being so celebrated in those days for their energy as leaders of the police), had detected a person in the act of mistaking some other man's pocket-handkerchief for his own—a most natural mistake, I should fancy, where people stood crowded together so thickly. No storm of any kind awaited us, and yet at that moment there was no other arrival to divide the public attention; for, in order that we might see everything from first to last, we were amongst the very earliest parties. Neither did our party escape under any mistake of the crowd: silence had succeeded to the uproar caused by the tender meeting between the thief and the major; and a man, who stood in a conspicuous situation, proclaimed aloud to those below him the name or title of members as they drove up. "That," said he, "is the Earl of Altamont; the lame gentleman, I mean." Perhaps, however, his knowledge did not extend so far as to the politics of a nobleman who had taken no violent or factious part in public affairs. At least the dreaded insults did not follow,

or only in the very feeblest manifestations. We entered; and, by way of seeing everything, we went even to the robing-room. The man who presented his robes to Lord Altamont seemed to me, of all whom I saw on that day, the one who wore the face of deepest depression. But, whether this indicated the loss of a lucrative situation, or was really disinterested sorrow, growing out of a patriotic trouble at the knowledge that he was now officiating for the last time, I could not guess. The House of Lords, decorated (if I remember) with hangings representing the battle of the Boyne, was nearly empty when we entered—an accident which furnished to Lord Altamont the opportunity required for explaining to us the whole course and ceremonial of public business on ordinary occasions.

Gradually the House filled: beautiful women sat intermingled amongst the peers; and, in one party of these, surrounded by a bevy of admirers, we saw our fair but frail enchantress of the packet. She, on her part, saw and recognised us by an affable nod; no stain upon her cheek, indicating that she suspected to what extent she was indebted to our discretion; for it is a proof of the unaffected sorrow and the solemn awe which oppressed us both, that we had not mentioned, even to Lord Altamont, nor ever *did* mention, the scene which chance had revealed to us. Next came a stir within the house, and an uproar resounding from without, which announced the arrival of his Excellency. Entering the house, he also, like the other peers, wheeled round to the throne, and made to that mysterious seat a profound homage. Then commenced the public business, in which, if I recollect, the Chancellor played the most conspicuous part—that Chancellor (Lord Clare) of whom it was affirmed in those days, by a political opponent, that he might swim in the innocent blood which he had caused to be shed. But nautical men, I suspect, would have demurred to that estimate. Then were summoned to the bar—summoned for the last time—the gentlemen of the House of Commons; in the van of whom, and drawing all eyes upon himself, stood Lord Castlereagh. Then came the recitation of many acts passed during the session, and the sounding ratification, the jovian

"Annuit et nutu totum tremefecit Olympum,"

contained in the *Soit fait comme il est desiré*, or the more peremptory *Le Roi le veut*. At which point in the order of succession came the royal assent to the Union Bill, I cannot distinctly recollect. But one thing I *do* recollect—that no audible expression, no buzz, nor murmur, nor *susurrus* even, testified the feelings which, doubtless, lay rankling in many bosoms. Setting apart all public or patriotic considerations, even then I said to myself, as I surveyed the whole assemblage of ermined peers, "How is it, and by what unaccountable magic, that William Pitt can have prevailed on all these hereditary legislators and heads of patrician houses to renounce so easily, with nothing worth the name of a struggle, and no reward worth the name of an indemnification, the very brightest jewel in their coronets? This morning they all rose from their couches Peers of Parliament, individual pillars of the realm, indispensable parties to every law that could pass. To-morrow they will be nobody —men of straw—*terræ filii*. What madness has persuaded them to part with their birthright, and to cashier themselves and their children for ever into mere titular Lords?" As to the Commoners at the bar, *their* case was different: they had no life estate at all events in their honours; and they might have the same chance for entering the Imperial Parliament amongst the hundred Irish members, as for re-entering a native Parliament. Neither, again, amongst the peers was the case always equal. Several of the higher had English titles, which would, at any rate, open the central Parliament to their ambition. That privilege, in particular, attached to Lord Altamont.[1] And he, in any case, from his large property, was tolerably sure of finding his way thither (as in fact for the rest of his life he *did*) amongst the twenty-eight Representative Peers. The wonder was in the case of petty and obscure lords, who had no weight personally, and none in right of their estates. Of these men, as they were notoriously not enriched by Mr. Pitt, as the distribution of

[1] According to my remembrance, he was Baron Mounteagle in the English peerage. [Not at this date: not till 20th February 1806, when he was created a Baron of the United Kingdom, by the title of Baron Monteagle of Westport, Co. Mayo, having been Marquis of Sligo in the Irish peerage since 29th December 1800.—M.]

honours was not very large, and as no honour could countervail the one they lost—I could not, and cannot, fathom the policy. Thus much I am sure of—that, had such a measure been proposed by a political speculator previously to Queen Anne's reign, he would have been scouted as a dreamer and a visionary, who calculated upon men being generally somewhat worse than Esau—viz., giving up their birthrights, and *without* the mess of pottage. However, on this memorable day, thus it was the Union was ratified; the bill received the royal assent without a muttering, or a whispering, or the protesting echo of a sigh. Perhaps there might be a little pause—a silence like that which follows an earthquake; but there was no plain-spoken Lord Belhaven, as on the corresponding occasion in Edinburgh, to fill up the silence with, "So, there's an end of an auld sang!" All was or looked courtly, and free from vulgar emotion. One person only I remarked whose features were suddenly illuminated by a smile, a sarcastic smile, as I read it; which, however, might be all a fancy. It was Lord Castlereagh; who, at the moment when the irrevocable words were pronounced, looked with a penetrating glance amongst a party of ladies. His own wife was one of that party; but I did not discover the particular object on whom his smile had settled. After this I had no leisure to be interested in anything which followed. "You are all," thought I to myself, "a pack of vagabonds henceforward, and interlopers, with actually no more right to be here than myself. I am an intruder; so are you." Apparently they thought so themselves; for, soon after this solemn *fiat* of Jove had gone forth, their lordships, having no farther title to their robes (for which I could not help wishing that a party of Jewish old-clothesmen would at this moment have appeared and made a loud bidding), made what haste they could to lay them aside for ever. The House dispersed much more rapidly than it had assembled. Major Sirr was found outside, just where we left him, laying down the law (as before) about pocket-handkerchiefs to old and young practitioners; and all parties adjourned to find what consolation they might in the great evening event of dinner.[1]

[1] The last sitting of the Irish Parliament, thus commemorated

Thus we were set at liberty from Dublin. Parliaments, and installations, and masked balls, with all other secondary splendours in celebration of primary splendours, reflex glories that reverberated original glories, at length had ceased to shine upon the Irish metropolis. The "season," as it is called in great cities, was over; unfortunately the last season that was ever destined to illuminate the society or to stimulate the domestic trade of Dublin. It began to be thought scandalous to be found in town: *nobody*, in fact, remained, except some two hundred thousand people, who never did, nor ever would, wear ermine; and in all Ireland there remained nothing at all to attract, except *that* which no king, and no two Houses, can by any conspiracy abolish—viz., the beauty of her most verdant scenery. I speak of that part which chiefly it is that I know—the scenery of the west—Connaught beyond other provinces, and, in Connaught, Mayo beyond other counties. There it was, and in the county next adjoining, that Lord Altamont's large estates were situated; the family mansion and beautiful park being in Mayo. Thither, as nothing else now remained to divert us from what, in fact, we had thirsted for throughout the heats of summer, and throughout the magnificences of the capital, at length we set off by movements as slow and circuitous as those of any royal *progress* in the reign of Elizabeth. Making but short journeys on each day, and resting always at the house of some private friend, I thus obtained an opportunity of seeing the old Irish nobility and gentry more extensively, and on a more intimate footing, than I had hoped for. No experience of this kind, throughout my whole life, so much interested me. In a little work, not much known, of Suetonius, the most interesting record which survives of the early Roman literature, it comes out incidentally that many books, many idioms, and verbal peculiarities belonging to the primitive ages of Roman culture, were to be found still lingering in the old Roman settlements, both Gaulish and Spanish, long after they had become obsolete (and sometimes unintel-

by De Quincey from his own recollections of his Dublin visit, was in July 1800: the Bill for the Union of Ireland with Great Britain, to take effect from 1st January 1801, having by that time been fought through all its stages in both Parliaments.—M.

ligible) in Rome. From the tardiness and the difficulty of communication, the want of newspapers, &c., it followed, naturally enough, that the distant provincial towns, though not without their own separate literature and their own literary professors, were always two or three generations in the rear of the metropolis ; and thus it happened that, about the time of Augustus, there were some grammatici in Rome, answering to our black-letter critics, who sought the material of their researches in Boulogne (*Gessoriacum*), in Arles (*Arelata*), or in Marseilles (*Massilia*). Now, the old Irish nobility—that part, I mean, which might be called the rural nobility—stood in the same relation to English manners and customs. Here might be found old rambling houses, in the style of antique English manorial chateaux, ill planned, perhaps, as regarded convenience and economy, with long rambling galleries, and windows innumerable, that evidently had never looked for that severe audit to which they were afterwards summoned by William Pitt ; but displaying, in the dwelling-rooms, a comfort and "cosiness," combined with magnificence, not always so effectually attained in modern times. Here were old libraries, old butlers, and old customs, that seemed all alike to belong to the era of Cromwell, or even an earlier era than his ; whilst the ancient names, to one who had some acquaintance with the great events of Irish history, often strengthened the illusion. Not that I could pretend to be familiar with Irish history *as* Irish ; but, as a conspicuous chapter in the difficult policy of Queen Elizabeth, of Charles I., and of Cromwell, nobody who had read the English history could be a stranger to the O'Neils, the O'Donnells, the Ormonds (*i.e.*, the Butlers), the Inchiquins, or the De Burghs, and many scores beside. I soon found, in fact, that the aristocracy of Ireland might be divided into two great sections : the native Irish—territorial fixtures, so powerfully described by Maturin ; and those, on the other hand, who spent so much of their time and revenues at Bath, Cheltenham, Weymouth, London, &c., as to have become almost entirely English. It was the former whom we chiefly visited ; and I remarked that, in the midst of hospitality the most unbounded, and the amplest comfort, some of these were conspicuously in the rear of the English commercial

bellions : separate in time ; separate in space ; separate by the character of their events ; and separate even as regarded their proximate causes. The first of these arose in the vernal part of summer, and wasted its fury upon the County of Wexford in the *centre* of the kingdom. The second arose in the autumn, and was confined entirely to the *western* province of Connaught. Each, resting (it is true) upon causes ultimately the same, had yet its own separate occasions and excitements ; for the first arose upon a premature explosion from a secret society of most subtle organisation ; and the second upon the encouragement of a French invasion. And each of these insurrections had its own separate leaders, and its own local agents. The first, though precipitated into action by fortunate discoveries on the part of the government, had been anxiously preconcerted for three years. The second was an unpremeditated effort called forth by a most ill-timed, and also ill-concerted, foreign invasion. The general predisposing causes to rebellion were doubtless the same in both cases : but the exciting causes of the moment were different in each. And, finally, they were divided by a complete interval of two months.

One very remarkable feature there was, however, in which these two separate rebellions of 1798 coincided : and *that* was, the narrow range, as to time, within which each ran its course. Neither of them outran the limits of one *lunar* month. It is a fact, however startling, that each, though a perfect civil war in all its proportions, frequent in warlike incident, and the former rich in tragedy, passed through all the stages of growth, maturity, and final extinction, within one single revolution of the moon. For all the rebel movements, subsequent to the morning of Vinegar Hill, are to be viewed not at all in the light of manœuvres made in the spirit of military hope, but in the light of final struggles for self-preservation made in the spirit of absolute despair, as regarded the original purposes of the war, or, indeed, as regarded any purposes whatever beyond that of instant safety. The solitary object contemplated was to reach some district lonely enough, and with elbow-room enough, for quiet, unmolested dispersion.

A few pages will recapitulate these two civil wars. I begin with the first :—The War of American Separation

touched and quickened the dry bones that lay waiting as it were for life through the West of Christendom. The year 1782 brought that war to its winding-up ; and the same year it was that called forth Grattan and the Irish volunteers. These *volunteers* came forward as allies of England against French and Spanish invasion ; but, once embattled, what should hinder them from detecting a flaw in their commission, and reading it as valid against England herself ? In that sense they *did* read it. That Ireland had seen her own case dimly reflected in that of America, and that such a reference was stirring through the national mind, appears from a remarkable fact in the history of the year which followed. In 1783, a haughty petition was addressed to the throne, on behalf of the Roman Catholics, by an association that arrogated to itself the style and title of a *Congress.* No man could suppose that a designation so ominously significant had been chosen by accident ; and by the English Government it was received, as it was meant, for an insult and a menace. What came next? The French Revolution. All flesh moved under that inspiration. Fast and rank now began to germinate the seed sown for the ten years preceding in Ireland ; too fast and too rankly for the policy that suited her situation. Concealment or delay, compromise or temporising, would not have been brooked, at this moment, by the fiery temperament of Ireland, had it not been through the extraordinary composition of that secret society into which the management of her affairs now began to devolve. In the year 1792, as we are told, commenced, and in 1795 was finished, the famous association of *United Irishmen.* By these terms *commenced* and *finished,* we are to understand not the purposes or the arrangements of their conspiracy against the existing government, but that network of organisation, delicate as lace for ladies, and strong as the harness of artillery horses, which now enmeshed almost every province of Ireland, knitting the strength of her peasantry into unity and disposable divisions. This, it seems, was completed in 1795. In a complete history of these times, no one chapter would deserve so ample an investigation as this subtle web of association, rising upon a large base, expanding in proportion to the extent of the particular county, and by intermediate

links ascending to some unknown apex; all so graduated, and in such nice interdependency, as to secure the instantaneous propagation upwards and downwards, laterally or obliquely, of any impulse whatever; and yet so effectually shrouded, that nobody knew more than the two or three individual agents in immediate juxtaposition with himself, by whom he communicated with those above his head or below his feet. This organisation, in fact, of the United Irishmen combined the best features, as to skill, of the two most elaborate and most successful of all secret societies recorded in history; one of which went before the Irish Society by centuries, and one followed it after an interval of five-and-twenty years. These two are the *Fehm-Gericht*, or court of ban and extermination, which, having taken its rise in Westphalia, is usually called the Secret Tribunal of Westphalia, and which reached its full development in the fourteenth century. The other is the Hellenistic Hetæria (Ἑταιρια)—a society which, passing for one of pure literary *dilettanti*, under the secret countenance of the late Capo d'Istria (then a confidential minister of the Czar), did actually succeed so far in hoaxing the cabinets of Europe, that one-third of European kings put down their names, and gave their aid, as conspirators against the Sultan of Turkey, whilst credulously supposing themselves honorary correspondents of a learned body for reviving the arts and literature of Athens. These two I call the most successful of all secret societies, because both were arrayed against the existing administrations throughout the entire lands upon which they sought to operate. The German Society disowned the legal authorities as too weak for the ends of justice, and succeeded in bringing the cognisance of crimes within its own secret yet consecrated usurpation. The Grecian Society made the existing powers the final object of its hostility; lived unarmed amongst the very oppressors whose throats it had dedicated to the sabre; and, in a very few years, saw its purpose accomplished.

The Society of United Irishmen combined the best parts in the organisation of both these secret fraternities, and obtained *their* advantages. The society prospered in defiance of the government; nor would the government, though

armed with all the powers of the Dublin police and of state thunder, have succeeded in mastering this society ; but, on the contrary, the society would assuredly have surprised and mastered the government, had it not been undermined by the perfidy of a confidential brother. One instrument for dispersing knowledge, employed by the United Irishmen, is worth mentioning, as it is applicable to any cause, and may be used with much greater effect in an age when everybody is taught to read. They printed newspapers on a single side of the sheet, which were thus fitted for being placarded against the walls. This expedient had probably been suggested by Paris, where such newspapers were often placarded, and generally for the bloodiest purposes. But Louvet, in his "Memoirs," mentions one conducted by himself on better principles : it was printed at the public expense ; and sometimes more than twenty thousand copies of a single number were attached to the corners of streets. This was called the "Centinel" : and those who are acquainted with the "Memoirs of Madame Roland" will remember that she cites Louvet's paper as a model for all of its class. The "Union Star" was the paper which the United Irishmen published upon this plan ; previous papers on the ordinary plan— viz., the "Northern Star" and the "Press"— having been violently put down by the government. The "Union Star," however, it must be acknowledged, did not seek much to elevate the people by addressing them through their understandings : it was merely a violent appeal to their passions, and directed against all who had incurred the displeasure of the society. Newspapers, meantime, of every kind it was easy for the government to suppress. But the secret society annoyed and crippled the government in other modes, which it was not easy to parry ; and all blows dealt in return were dealt in the dark, and aimed at a shadow. The society called upon Irishmen to abstain generally from ardent spirits, as a means of destroying the excise ; and it is certain that the society was obeyed, in a degree which astonished neutral observers, all over Ireland. The same society by a printed proclamation, called upon the people not to purchase the quit-rents of the crown, which were then on sale ; and not to receive bank-notes in payment, because (as

the proclamation told them) a "burst" was coming, when such paper, and the securities for such purchases, would fall to a ruinous discount. In this case, after much distress to the public service, government obtained a partial triumph by the law which cancelled the debt on a refusal to receive the state paper, and which quartered soldiers upon all tradesmen who demurred to such a tender. But, upon the whole, it was becoming painfully evident, that in Ireland there were two co-ordinate governments, coming into collision at every step; and that the one which more generally had the upper hand in the struggle was the secret Society of United Irishmen, whose members individually, and whose local headquarters, were alike screened from the attacks of its rival—viz., the State Government at the Castle—by a cloud of impenetrable darkness.

That cloud was at last pierced. A treacherous or weak brother, high in the ranks of the society, and deep in their confidence, happened, when travelling up to Dublin in company with a Royalist, to speak half mysteriously, half ostentatiously, upon the delicate position which he held in the councils of his dangerous party. This weak man, Thomas Reynolds, a Roman Catholic gentleman, of Kilkea Castle, in Kildare, colonel of a regiment of United Irish, treasurer for Kildare, and in other offices of trust for the secret society, was prevailed on by Mr. William Cope, a rich merchant of Dublin, who alarmed his mind by pictures of the horrors attending a revolution under the circumstances of Ireland, to betray all he knew to the government. His treachery was first meditated in the last week of February 1798; and, in consequence of his depositions, on March 12, at the house of Oliver Bond, in Dublin, the government succeeded in arresting a large body of the leading conspirators. The whole committee of Leinster, amounting to thirteen members, was captured on this occasion; but a still more valuable prize was made in the persons of those who presided over the Irish Directory—viz., Emmet, M'Niven, Arthur O'Connor, and Oliver Bond. As far as names went, their places were immediately filled up; and a hand-bill was issued, on the same day, with the purpose of intercepting the effects of despondency amongst the great body of the conspirators. But Emmet and O'Connor were not men to be

effectually replaced: government had struck a fatal blow, without being fully aware at first of their own good luck. On the 19th of May following, in consequence of a proclamation (May 11), offering a thousand pounds for his capture, Lord Edward Fitzgerald was apprehended at the house of Mr. Nicholas Murphy, a merchant in Dublin, but after a very desperate resistance. The leader of the arresting party, Major Swan, a Dublin magistrate, distinguished for his energy, was wounded by Lord Edward; and Ryan, one of the officers, so desperately, that he died within a fortnight. Lord Edward himself languished for some time, and died in great agony on the 3d of June, from a pistol-shot which took effect on his shoulder. Lord Edward Fitzgerald might be regarded as an injured man. From the exuberant generosity of his temper, he had powerfully sympathised with the French Republicans at an early stage of their revolution; and, having, with great indiscretion, but an indiscretion that admitted of some palliation in so young a man and of so ardent a temperament, publicly avowed his sympathy, he was ignominiously dismissed from the army. That act made an enemy of one who, on several grounds, was not a man to be despised; for, though weak as respected his powers of self-control, Lord Edward was well qualified to make himself beloved; he had considerable talents; his very name, as a son of the only ducal house [1] in Ireland, was a spell and a rallying-word for a day of battle to the Irish peasantry; and, finally, by his marriage with a natural daughter of the then Duke of Orleans, he had founded some important connections and openings to secret influence in France. The young lady whom he had married was generally known by the name of *Pamela;* and it has been usually supposed that she is the person described by Miss Edgeworth, under the name of Virginia, in the latter part of her "Belinda." How that may be, I cannot pretend to say: Pamela was certainly led into some indiscretions; in particular, she was said to have gone to a ball

[1] "*The only ducal house*":—That is, the only one not royal. There are four provinces in Ireland—*Ulster, Connaught, Munster,* which three give old traditional titles to three personages of the blood-royal. Remains only *Lcinster,* which gives the title of Duke to the Fitzgeralds.

without shoes or stockings, which seems to argue the same sort of ignorance, and the same docility to any chance impressions, which characterise the Virginia of Miss Edgeworth. She was a reputed daughter (as I have said) of Philippe Egalité, and her putative mother was Madame de Genlis, who had been settled in that prince's family, as governess to his children, more especially to the sister of the present French King.[1] Lord Edward's whole course had been marked by generosity and noble feeling. Far better to have pardoned[2] such a man, and (if that were possible) to have conciliated his support; but, says a contemporary Irishman, "those were not times of conciliation."

Some days after this event were arrested the two brothers named Shearer, men of talent, who eventually suffered for treason. These discoveries were due to treachery of a peculiar sort; not to the treachery of an apostate brother breaking his faith, but of a counterfeit brother simulating the character of conspirator, and by that fraud obtaining a key to the fatal secrets of the United Irishmen. His perfidy, therefore, consisted, not in any betrayal of secrets, but in the frand by which he obtained them. Government, without having yet penetrated to the very heart of the mystery, had now discovered enough to guide them in their most energetic precautions; and the result was, that the conspirators, whose

[1] "*Present French King*":—Viz., in the year 1833.

[2] "*To have pardoned*," &c.:—This was written under circumstances of great hurry; and, were it not for that palliation, would be inexcusably thoughtless. For, in a double sense, it is doubtful how far the government *could* have pardoned Lord Edward. First, in a prudential sense, was it possible (except in the spirit of a German sentimentalising drama) to pardon a conspicuous, and, within certain limits, a very influential officer, for publicly avowing opinions tending to treason, and at war with the constitutional system of the land which fed him, and which claimed his allegiance? Was it possible, in point of prudence or in point of dignity, to overlook such anti-national sentiments, whilst neither disavowed nor ever likely to be disavowed? Was this possible—regard being had to the inevitable effect of such *unearned* forgiveness upon the army at large? But, secondly, in a merely logical sense of practical self-consistency, would it have been rational or even intelligible to pardon a man who probably *would* not be pardoned; that is, who must (consenting or not consenting) benefit by the concessions of the pardon, whilst disowning all reciprocal obligations?

policy had hitherto been to wait for the co-operation of a French army, now suddenly began to distrust that policy: their fear was, that the ground would be cut from beneath their feet if they waited any longer. More was evidently risked by delay than by dispensing altogether with foreign aid. To forego this aid was perilous; to wait for it was ruin. It was resolved, therefore, to commence the insurrection on the 23d of May; and, in order to distract the government, to commence it by simultaneous assaults upon all the military posts in the neighbourhood of Dublin. This plan was discovered, but scarcely in time to prevent the effects of a surprise. On the 21st, late in the evening, the conspiracy had been announced by the Lord-Lieutenant's Secretary to the Lord Mayor; and, on the following day, by a message from his Excellency to both Houses of Parliament.

The insurrection, however, in spite of this official warning, began at the appointed hour. The skirmishes were many, and in many places; but, generally speaking, they were not favourable in their results to the insurgents. The mail-coaches, agreeably to the preconcerted plan, had all been intercepted; their non-arrival being everywhere understood by the conspirators as a silent signal that the war had commenced. Yet this summons to the more distant provinces, though truly interpreted, had not been truly answered. The communication between the capital and the interior, almost completely interrupted at first, had been at length fully restored; and a few days saw the main strength (as it was supposed) of the insurrection suppressed without much bloodshed. But hush! what is *that* in the rear?

Just at this moment, when all the world was disposed to think the whole affair quietly composed, the flame burst out with tenfold fury in a part of the country from which government, with some reason, had turned away their anxieties and their preparations. This was the County of Wexford, which the Earl of Mountnorris had described to the government as so entirely well-affected to the loyal cause, that he had personally pledged himself for its good conduct. On the night before Whitsunday, however, May 27, the standard of revolt was *there* raised by John Murphy,

a Catholic priest, well known henceforwards under the title of Father Murphy.

The campaign opened inauspiciously for the Royalists. The rebels had posted themselves on two eminences: Kilthomas, about ten miles to the westward of Gorey; and the Hill of Oulart, half-way (*i.e.*, about a dozen miles) between Gorey and Wexford. They were attacked at each point on Whitsunday. From the first point they were driven easily, and with considerable loss; but at Oulart the issue was very different. Father Murphy commanded here in person; and, finding that his men gave way in great confusion before a picked body of the North Cork Militia, under the command of Colonel Foote, he contrived to persuade them that their flight was leading them right upon a body of royal cavalry posted to intercept their retreat. This fear effectually halted them. The insurgents, through a prejudice natural to inexperience, had an unreasonable dread of cavalry. A second time, therefore, facing about to retreat from this imaginary body of horse, they came, of necessity, and without design, full upon their pursuers, whom unhappily the intoxication of victory had by this time brought into the most careless disarray. These, almost to a man, the rebels annihilated; universal consternation followed amongst the Royalists; Father Murphy led them to Ferns, and thence to the attack of Enniscorthy.

Has the reader witnessed, or has he heard described, the sudden burst—the explosion, one might say—by which a Swedish winter passes into spring, and spring simultaneously into summer? The icy sceptre of winter does not there thaw and melt away by just gradations: it is broken, it is shattered, in a day, in an hour, and with a violence brought home to *every* sense. No second type of resurrection, so mighty or so affecting, is manifested by nature in southern climates. Such is the headlong tumult, such "the torrent rapture," by which life is let loose amongst the air, the earth, and the waters under the earth. Exactly what this vernal resurrection is in manifestations of power and life, by comparison with climates that have no winter—such, and marked with features as distinct, was this Irish insurrection, when suddenly surrendered to the whole contagion of

politico-religious fanaticism, by comparison with vulgar *martinet* strategics, and the pedantry of technical warfare. What a picture must Enniscorthy have presented on the 27th of May! Fugitives crowding in from Ferns announced the rapid advance of the rebels, now at least 7000 strong, drunk with victory, and maddened with vindictive fury. Not long after mid-day, their advanced guard, well armed with muskets (pillaged, be it observed, from royal magazines, hastily deserted), commenced a tumultuous assault. Less than 300 militia and yeomanry formed the garrison of the place, which had no sort of defences, except the natural one of the river Slaney. This, however, was fordable, and *that* the assailants knew. The slaughter amongst the rebels, meantime, from the little caution they exhibited, and their total defect of military skill, was murderous. Spite of their immense numerical advantages, it is probable they would have been defeated. But in Enniscorthy (as where not?) treason from within was emboldened to raise its crest at the very crisis of suspense; incendiaries were at work; and flames began to issue from many houses at once. Retreat itself became suddenly doubtful; depending, as it did, altogether upon the state of the wind. At the right hand of every Royalist stood a traitor; in his own house oftentimes lurked other traitors, waiting for the signal to begin; in the front was the enemy; in the rear was a line of blazing streets. Three hours the battle had raged; it was now four P.M., and at this moment the garrison hastily gave way, and fled to Wexford.

Now came a scene which swallowed up all distinct or separate features in its frantic confluence of horrors. All the loyalists of Enniscorthy, all the gentry for miles around, who had congregated in that town, as a centre of security, were summoned at that moment, not to an orderly retreat, but to instant flight. At one end of the street were seen the rebel pikes, and bayonets, and fierce faces, already gleaming through the smoke: at the other end volumes of fire, surging and billowing from the thatched roofs and blazing rafters, beginning to block up the avenues of escape. Then began the agony and uttermost conflict of what is worst and what is best in human nature. Then was to be seen the

very delirium of fear, and the very delirium of vindictive malice ; private and ignoble hatred, of ancient origin, shrouding itself in the mask of patriotic wrath ; the tiger glare of just vengeance, fresh from intolerable wrongs and the never-to-be-forgotten ignominy of stripes and personal degradation ; panic, self-palsied by its own excess ; flight, eager or stealthy, according to the temper and the means ; volleying pursuit ; the very frenzy of agitation, under every mode of excitement ; and here and there, towering aloft, the desperation of maternal love, victorious and supreme above all lower passions. I recapitulate and gather under general abstractions many an individual anecdote, reported by those who were on that day present in Enniscorthy ; for at Ferns, not far off, and deeply interested in all those transactions, I had private friends, intimate participators in the trials of that fierce hurricane, and joint sufferers with those who suffered most. Ladies were then seen in crowds hurrying on foot to Wexford, the nearest asylum, though fourteen miles distant, many in slippers, bareheaded, and without any supporting arm ; for the flight of their defenders, having been determined by a sudden angular movement of the assailants, coinciding with the failure of their own ammunition, had left no time for warning ; and fortunate it was for the unhappy fugitives, that the confusion of burning streets, concurring with the seductions of pillage, drew aside so many of the victors as to break the unity of a pursuit else hellishly unrelenting.

Wexford, meantime, was in no condition to promise more than a momentary shelter. Orders had been already issued to extinguish all domestic fires throughout the town, and to unroof all the thatched houses ; so great was the jealousy of internal treason. From without, also, the alarm was every hour increasing. On Tuesday the 29th of May the rebel army advanced from Enniscorthy to a post called Three Rocks, not much above two miles from Wexford. Their strength was now increased to at least 15,000 men. Never was there a case requiring more energy in the disposers of the royal forces ; never one which met with less, even in the most responsible quarters. The nearest military station was the fort at Duncannon, twenty-three miles distant. Thither,

on the 29th, an express had been despatched by the Mayor of Wexford, reporting their situation, and calling for immediate aid. General Fawcet replied, that he would himself march that same evening with the 13th regiment, part of the Meath Militia, and sufficient artillery. Relying upon these assurances, the small parties of militia and yeomanry then in Wexford gallantly threw themselves upon the most trying services in advance. Some companies of the Donegal Militia, not mustering above 200 men, marched immediately to a position between the rebel camp and Wexford; whilst others of the North Cork Militia and the local yeomanry, with equal cheerfulness, undertook the defence of that town. Meantime, General Fawcet had consulted his personal comfort by *halting for the night*, though aware of the dreadful emergency, at a station sixteen miles short of Wexford. A small detatchment, however, with part of his artillery, he sent forward; these were the next morning intercepted by the rebels at Three Rocks, and massacred almost to a man. Two officers, who escaped the slaughter, carried the intelligence to the advance post of the Donegals; but they, so far from being disheartened, marched immediately against the rebel army, enormous as was the disproportion, with the purpose of recapturing the artillery. A singular contrast this to the conduct of General Fawcet, who retreated hastily to Duncannon upon the first intelligence of this disaster. Such a regressive movement was so little anticipated by the gallant Donegals, that they continued to advance against the enemy, until the precision with which the captured artillery was served against themselves, and the non-appearance of the promised aid, warned them to retire. At Wexford they found all in confusion and the hurry of retreat. The flight, as it may be called, of General Fawcet was now confirmed; and, as the local position of Wexford made it indefensible against artillery, the whole body of Loyalists, except those whom insufficient warning had thrown into the rear, now fled from the wrath of the rebels to Duncannon. It is a shocking illustration (*if truly reported*) of the thoughtless ferocity which characterised too many of the Orange troops, that, along the whole line of this retreat, they continued to burn the cabins of Roman Catholics, and often to massacre

in cold blood the unoffending inhabitants; totally forgetful of the many hostages whom the insurgents now held in their power, and careless of the dreadful provocations which they were thus throwing out to the bloodiest reprisals.

Thus it was, and through mismanagement thus mischievously alert, or through torpor thus unaccountably base, that actually, on the 30th of May, not having raised their standard before the 26th, the rebels had already been permitted to possess themselves of the County of Wexford in its whole southern division—Ross and Duncannon only excepted; of which the latter was not liable to capture by *coup de main*, and the other was saved by the procrastination of the rebels. The northern division of the county was overrun pretty much in the same hasty style, and through the same desperate neglect in previous concert of plans. Upon first turning their views to the north, the rebels had taken up a position on the Hill of Corrigrua, as a station from which they could march with advantage upon the town of Gorey, lying seven miles to the northward. On the first of June, a truly brilliant affair had taken place between a mere handful of militia and yeomanry from this town of Gorey and a strong detachment from the rebel camp. Many persons at the time regarded this as the best fought action in the whole war. The two parties had met about two miles from Gorey; and it is pretty certain that, if the yeoman cavalry could have been prevailed on to charge at the critical moment, the defeat would have been a most murderous one to the rebels. As it was, they escaped, though with considerable loss of honour. Yet even this they were allowed to retrieve within a few days, in a remarkable way, and with circumstances of still greater scandal to the military discretion in high quarters than had attended the movements of General Fawcet in the south.

On the 4th of June, a little army of 1500 men, under the command of Major-General Loftus, had assembled at Gorey. The plan was—to march by two different roads upon the rebel encampment at Corrigrua; and this plan was adopted. Meantime, on the same night, the rebel army had put themselves in motion for Gorey; and of this counter-movement full and timely information had been given by a farmer at the royal head-quarters; but such was the obstinate

infatuation that no officer of rank would condescend to give him a hearing. The consequences may be imagined. Colonel Walpole, an Englishman, full of courage, but presumptuously disdainful of the enemy, led a division upon one of the two roads, having no scouts, nor taking any sort of precaution. Suddenly he found his line of march crossed by the enemy in great strength: he refused to halt or to retire; was shot through the head; and a great part of the advanced detachment was slaughtered on the spot, and his artillery captured. General Loftus, advancing on the parallel road, heard the firing, and detached the grenadier company of the Antrim Militia to the aid of Walpole. These, to the amount of seventy men, were cut off almost to a man; and when the general, who could not cross over to the other road through the enclosures, from the encumbrance of his artillery, had at length reached the scene of action by a long circuit, he found himself in the following truly ludicrous position:— The rebels had pursued Colonel Walpole's division to Gorey, and possessed themselves of that place; the general had thus lost his head-quarters, without having seen the army, whom he had suffered to slip past him in the dark. He marched back disconsolately to Gorey, took a look at the rebel posts which now occupied the town in strength, was saluted with a few rounds from his own cannon, and finally retreated out of the county.

This movement of General Loftus, and the previous one of General Fawcet, circumstantially illustrate the puerile imbecility with which the royal cause was then conducted. Both movements foundered in an hour, through surprises against which each had been amply forewarned. Fortunately for the government, the affairs of the rebels were managed even worse. Two sole enterprises were undertaken by them after this, previously to the closing battle of Vinegar Hill; both being of the very utmost importance to their interests, and both sure of success, if they had been pushed forward in time. The first was the attack upon Ross, undertaken on the 29th of May, the day after the capture of Enniscorthy. Had that attack been pressed forward without delay, there never were two opinions as to the certainty of its success; and, *having* succeeded, it would have laid open to the rebels

the important counties of Waterford and Kilkenny. Being delayed until the 5th of June, the assault was repulsed with prodigious slaughter. The other was the attack upon Arklow in the north. On the capture of Gorey, on the night of June 4, as the immediate consequence of Colonel Walpole's defeat, had the rebels advanced upon Arklow, they would have found it for some days totally undefended; the whole garrison having retreated in panic, early on June 5, to Wicklow. The capture of this important place would have laid open the whole road to the capital; would probably have caused a rising in that great city; and, in any event, would have indefinitely prolonged the war, and multiplied the distractions of government. Merely from sloth, and the spirit of procrastination, however, the rebel army halted at Gorey until the 9th, and then advanced with what seemed the overpowering force of 27,000 men. It is a striking lesson upon the subject of procrastination, that precisely on that morning of June 9 the attempt had first become hopeless. Until then the place had been positively emptied of all inhabitants whatsoever. Exactly on the 9th the old garrison had been ordered back from Wicklow, and reinforced by a crack English regiment (the Durham Fencibles), on whom chiefly at this critical hour had devolved the defence; which was peculiarly trying, from the vast numbers of the assailants, but brilliant, masterly, and perfectly successful.

This obstinate and fiercely-contested battle of Arklow was indeed, by general consent, the hinge on which the rebellion turned. Nearly 30,000 men, armed every man of them with pikes, and 5000 with muskets, supported also by some artillery, sufficiently well served to do considerable execution at a most important point in the line of defence, could not be defeated without a very trying struggle. And here, again, it is worthy of record, that General Needham, who commanded on this day, would have followed the example of Generals Fawcet and Loftus, and have ordered a retreat, had he not been determinately opposed by Colonel Skerret of the Durham regiment. Such was the imbecility, and the want of moral courage, on the part of the military leaders: for it would be unjust to impute any defect in animal courage to the feeblest of these leaders. General

Needham, for example, exposed his person, without reserve, throughout the whole of this difficult day. Any amount of cannot-shot he could face cheerfully, but not a trying responsibility.

From the defeat of Arklow, the rebels gradually retired, between the 9th and the 20th of June, to their main military position of Vinegar Hill, which lies immediately above the town of Enniscorthy, and had fallen into their hands, concurrently with that place, on the 28th of May. Here their whole forces, with the exception of perhaps 6000,—who attacked General Moore (ten and a-half years later the Moore of Corunna) when marching on the 26th towards Wexford,—had been concentrated; and to this point, therefore, as a focus, had the royal army, 13,000 strong, with a respectable artillery, under the supreme command of General Lake, converged in four separate divisions, about the 19th and 20th of June. The great blow was to be struck on the 21st; and the plan was, that the royal forces, moving to the assault of the rebel position upon four lines at right angles to each other (as if, for instance, from the four cardinal points to the same centre), should surround their encampment, and shut up every avenue to escape. On this plan, the field of battle would have been one vast slaughter-house; for quarter was not granted on either side.[1] But the quadrille, if it were ever seriously concerted, was entirely defeated by the failure of General Needham, who did not present himself with *his* division until nine o'clock, a full half-hour after the battle was over, and thus earned the sobriquet of *The late*[2]

[1] "*For quarter was not granted on either side*":—I repeat, as all along and necessarily I have repeated, that which orally I was told at the time, or which subsequently I have read in published accounts. But the reader is aware by this time of my steadfast conviction that more easily might a camel go through the eye of a needle, than a reporter, fresh from a campaign blazing with partisanship, and that partisanship representing ancient and hereditary feuds, could by possibility cleanse himself from the *virus* of such a prejudice.

[2] The same jest was applied to Mr. Pitt's brother. When First Lord of the Admiralty, people calling on him as late as even 10 or 11 P.M. were told that his lordship was riding in the Park. On this account partly, but more pointedly with a malicious reference to the contrast between his languor and the fiery activity of his father, the first earl, he was jocularly called *The late Lord Chatham.*

General Needham. Whether the failure were really in this officer, or (as was alleged by his apologists) had been already preconcerted in the inconsistent orders issued to him by General Lake, with the covert intention, as many believe, of mercifully counteracting his own scheme of wholesale butchery—to this day remains obscure. The effect of that delay, in whatever way caused, was for once such as must win everybody's applause. The action had commenced at seven o'clock in the morning; by half-past eight, the whole rebel army was in flight; and, naturally making for the only point left unguarded, it escaped with no great slaughter (but leaving behind all its artillery, and a good deal of valuable plunder), through what was facetiously called ever afterwards *Needham's Gap.* After this capital rout of Vinegar Hill, the rebel army day by day mouldered away. A large body, however, of the fiercest and most desperate continued for some time to make flying marches in all directions, according to the positions of the King's forces, and the momentary favour of accidents. Once or twice they were brought to action by Sir James Duff and Sir Charles Asgill; and, ludicrously enough, once more they were suffered to escape by the eternal delays of the "late Needham." At length, however, after many skirmishes, and all varieties of local success, they finally dispersed upon a bog in the County of Dublin. Many desperadoes, however, took up their quarters for a long time in the dwarf woods of Killaughrim, near Enniscorthy, assuming the trade of marauders, but ludicrously designating themselves the Babes in the Wood. It is an inexplicable fact, that many deserters from the militia regiments, who had behaved well throughout the campaign, and adhered faithfully to their colours, now resorted to this confederation of the woods; from which it cost some trouble to dislodge them. Another party, in the woods and mountains of Wicklow, were found still more formidable, and continued to infest the adjacent country through the ensuing winter. These were not finally ejected from their lairs until after one of their chiefs had been killed in a night skirmish by a young man defending his house, and the other chief, weary of his savage life, had surrendered himself to transportation.

It diffused general satisfaction throughout Ireland, that, on the very day before the final engagement of Vinegar Hill, Lord Cornwallis made his entry into Dublin as the new Lord-Lieutenant. A proclamation, issued early in July, of general amnesty to all who had shed no blood except on the field of battle, notified to the country the new spirit of policy which now distinguished the government; and, doubtless, that one merciful change worked marvels in healing the agitations of the land. Still it was thought necessary that severe justice should take its course amongst the most conspicuous leaders or agents in the insurrection. Martial law still prevailed; and under that law we know, through a speech of the Duke of Wellington's, how entirely the very elements of justice are dependent upon individual folly or caprice. Many of those who had shown the greatest generosity, and with no slight risk to themselves, were now selected to suffer. Bagenal Harvey, a Protestant gentleman, who had held the supreme command of the rebel army for some time with infinite vexation to himself, and taxed with no one instance of cruelty or excess, was one of those doomed to execution. He had possessed an estate of nearly three thousand per annum; and at the same time with him was executed another gentleman, of more than three times that estate, Cornelius Grogan. Singular it was, that men of this condition and property, men of feeling and refinement, should have staked the happiness of their families upon a contest so forlorn. Some there were, however, and possibly these gentlemen, who could have explained their motives intelligibly enough: they had been forced by persecution, and actually baited into the ranks of the rebels. One picturesque difference in the deaths of these two gentlemen was remarkable, as contrasted with their previous habits. Grogan was constitutionally timid; and yet he faced the scaffold and the trying preparations of the executioner with fortitude. On the other hand, Bagenal Harvey, who had fought several duels with coolness, exhibited considerable trepidation in his last moments. Perhaps, in both, the difference might be due entirely to some physical accident of health, or momentary nervous derangement.[1]

[1] Perhaps also *not*. Possibly enough there may be no call for any

Among the crowd, however, of persons who suffered death at this disastrous era, there were two that merit a special commemoration for their virtuous resistance, in disregard of all personal risk, to a horrid fanaticism of cruelty. One was a butcher, the other a seafaring man—both rebels. But

such *exceptional* solution: for, after all, there may be nothing to solve—no *dignus vindice nodus*. As regards the sudden interchange of characters on the scaffold—the constitutionally brave man all at once becoming timid, and the timid man becoming brave—it must be remembered that the particular sort of courage applicable to duelling, when the danger is much more of a fugitive and momentary order than that which invests a battle lasting for hours, depends almost entirely upon a man's *confidence in his own luck*—a peculiarity of mind which exists altogether apart from native resources of courage, whether moral or physical: usually this mode of courage is but a transformed expression for a sanguine temperament. A man who is habitually depressed by a constitutional taint of despondency may carry into a duel a sublime principle of calm, self-sacrificing courage, as being possibly utterly without hope, a courage, therefore, which has to fight with internal resistance, to which there may be nothing corresponding in a cheerful temperament.

But there is another and separate agency through which the fear of death may happen to act as a disturbing force, and most irregularly, as viewed in relation to moral courage and strength of mind. This anomalous force is the imaginative and shadowy terror with which different minds recoil from death—not considered as an agony or torment, but considered as a mystery, and, next after God, as the most infinite of mysteries. In a brave man this terror may happen to be strong; in a pusillanimous man, simply through inertness and original feebleness of imagination, may happen to be scarcely developed. This oscillation of horror, alternating between death as an agony and death as a mystery, not only exists with a corresponding set of consequences accordingly as one or other prevails, but is sometimes consciously contemplated and put into the scales of comparison and counter-valuation. For instance, one of the early Cæsars reviewed the case thus: "*Emori nolo: me esse mortuum nihil æstumo*" (From death as the act and process of dying, I revolt: but as to death, viewed as a permanent state or condition, I don't value it at a straw). What this particular Cæsar detested, and viewed with burning malice, was death the agony—death the physical torment. As to death the mystery, want of sensibility to the infinite and the shadowy had disarmed *that* of its terrors for him. Yet, on the contrary, how many are there who face the mere physical anguish of dying with stern indifference. But death the mystery—death that, not satisfied with changing our objective, may attack even the roots of our subjective—*there* lies the mute, ineffable, voiceless horror before which all human courage is abashed, even as all human resistance becomes childish when measuring itself against gravitation.

they must have been truly generous, brave, and noble-minded men. During the occupation of Wexford by the rebel army, they were repeatedly the sole opponents, at great personal risk, to the general massacre then meditated by some few popish bigots. And, finally, when all resistance seemed likely to be unavailing, they both demanded resolutely from the chief patron of this atrocious policy that he should fight themselves, armed in whatever way he might prefer, and, as they expressed it, "prove himself a man," before he should be at liberty to sport in this wholesale way with innocent blood.

One painful fact I will state, in taking leave of this subject; and *that*, I believe, will be quite sufficient to sustain anything I have said in disparagement of the government; by which, however, I mean, in justice, the local administration of Ireland. For, as to the supreme government in England, that body must be supposed, at the utmost, to have passively acquiesced in the recommendations of the Irish Cabinet, even when it interfered so far. In particular, the scourgings and flagellations resorted to in Wexford and Kildare, &c., must have been originally suggested by minds familiar with the habits of the Irish aristocracy in the treatment of dependants. Candid Irishmen will admit that the habit of kicking, or threatening to kick, waiters in coffee-houses or other menial dependants — a habit which, in England, would be met instantly by defiance and menaces of action for assault and battery — is not yet altogether obsolete in Ireland.[1] Thirty years ago it was still more prevalent, and presupposed that spirit and temper in the treatment of menial dependants out of which, doubtless, arose the practice of judicial (*i.e.*, tentative) flagellations. Meantime, that fact with which I propose to close my recollections of this great tumult, and which seems to be a sufficient guarantee for the very severest reflections on the spirit of the government, is expressed significantly in the terms, used habitually by Roman Catholic gentlemen, in prudential exculpation of themselves, when threatened with inquiry for their conduct during these times of agitation:— "I thank my God that no man can charge me justly with

[1] "*Not yet altogether obsolete*":—Written in 1833.

having saved the life of any Protestant, or his house from pillage, by my intercession with the rebel chiefs." How! Did men boast of collusion with violence and the spirit of massacre? What did *that* mean? It meant this:—Some Roman Catholics had pleaded, and pleaded truly, as a reason for special indulgence to themselves, that any influence which might belong to them, on the score of religion or of private friendship, with the rebel authorities, had been used by them on behalf of persecuted Protestants, either in delivering them altogether, or in softening their doom. But, to the surprise of everybody, this plea was so far from being entertained favourably by the courts of inquiry, that, on the contrary, an argument was built upon it, dangerous in the last degree to the pleader. "You admit, then," it was retorted, "having had this very considerable influence upon the rebel councils; your influence extended to the saving of lives; in that case we must suppose you to have been known privately as their friend and supporter." Thus to have delivered an innocent man from murder argued that the deliverer must have been an accomplice of the murderous party. Readily it may be supposed that few would be disposed to urge such a vindication, when it became known in what way it was likely to operate. The government itself had made it perilous to profess humanity; and every man henceforward gloried publicly in his callousness and insensibility, as the one best safeguard to himself on a path so closely beset with rocks.

CHAPTER XI

FRENCH INVASION OF IRELAND, AND SECOND REBELLION OF 1798[1]

THE decisive battle of Vinegar Hill took place at Midsummer: and with that battle terminated the First Rebellion. Two months later, a French force, not making fully a thousand men, under the command of General Humbert, landed on the west coast of Ireland, and again roused the Irish peasantry to insurrection. This latter insurrection, and the invasion which aroused it, naturally had a peculiar interest for Lord Westport and myself, who, in our present abode of Westport House, were living in its local centre.

I in particular was led, by hearing on every side the conversation reverting to the dangers and tragic incidents of the era, separated from us by not quite two years, to make inquiries of everybody who had personally participated in the commotions. Records there were on every side, and memorials even in our bedrooms, of this French visit; for at one time they had occupied Westport House in some strength. The largest town in our neighbourhood was Castlebar, distant about eleven Irish miles. To this it was that the French addressed their very earliest efforts. Advancing rapidly, and with their usual style of theatrical confidence, they had obtained at first a degree of success which was almost surprising to their own insolent vanity,

[1] For the matter of this chapter De Quincey reverts to his paper in *Tait's Magazine* for April 1834.—M.

and which, long afterwards, became a subject of bitter mortification to our own army. Had there been at this point any energy at all corresponding to that of the enemy, or commensurate to the intrinsic superiority of our own troops in steadiness, the French would have been compelled to lay down their arms. The experience of those days, however, showed how deficient is the finest composition of an army, unless where its martial qualities have been developed by practice ; and how liable is all courage, when utterly inexperienced, to sudden panics. This gasconading advance, which would have foundered utterly against a single battalion of the troops which fought in 1812-13 amongst the Pyrenees, was here for the moment successful.

The bishop of this see, Dr. Stock, with his whole household, and, indeed, his whole pastoral charge, became on this occasion prisoners to the enemy. The Republican headquarters were fixed for a time in the Episcopal Palace : and there it was that General Humbert and his staff lived in familiar intercourse with the bishop ; who thus became well qualified to record (which he soon afterwards did in an anonymous pamphlet) the leading circumstances of the French incursion, and the consequent insurrection in Connaught, as well as the most striking features in the character and deportment of the Republican officers. Riding over the scene of these transactions daily for some months, in company with Dr. Peter Browne, the Dean of Ferns (an illegitimate son of the late Lord Altamont, and therefore half-brother to the present), whose sacred character had not prevented him from taking that military part which seemed, in those difficult moments, a duty of elementary patriotism laid upon all alike, I enjoyed many opportunities for checking the statements of the bishop. The small body of French troops which undertook this remote service had been detached in one-half from the army of the Rhine ; the other half had served under Napoleon in his first foreign campaign—viz., the Italian campaign of 1796, which accomplished the conquest of Northern Italy. Those from Germany showed by their looks and their meagre condition how much they had suffered ; and some of them, in describing their hardships, told their Irish acquaintance that, during the

siege of Metz, which had occurred in the previous winter of 1797, they had slept in holes made four feet below the surface of the snow. One officer declared solemnly that he had not once undressed, further than by taking off his coat, for a period of twelve months. The private soldiers had all the essential qualities fitting them for a difficult and trying service—"intelligence, activity, temperance, patience to a surprising degree, together with the exactest discipline." This is the statement of their candid and upright enemy. "Yet," says the bishop, "with all these martial qualities, if you except the grenadiers, they had nothing to catch the eye. Their stature, for the most part, was low, their complexion pale and yellow, their clothes much the worse for wear; to a superficial observer, they would have appeared incapable of enduring any hardship. These were the men, however, of whom it was presently observed, that they could be well content to live on bread or potatoes, to drink water, to make the stones of the street their bed, and to sleep in their clothes, with no covering but the canopy of heaven."—"How vast," says Cicero, "is the revenue of Parsimony!" and, by a thousand degrees more striking, how celestial is the strength that descends upon the feeble through Temperance!

It may well be imagined in what terror the families of Killala heard of a French invasion, and the necessity of immediately receiving a Republican army. As *Sansculottes*, these men all over Europe had the reputation of pursuing a ferocious marauding policy; in fact, they were held little better than sanguinary brigands. In candour, it must be admitted that their conduct at Killala belied these reports; though, on the other hand, an obvious interest obliged them to a more pacific demeanour in a land which they saluted as friendly, and designed to raise into extensive insurrection. The French army, so much dreaded, at length arrived. The general and his staff entered the palace; and the first act of one officer, on coming into the dining-room, was to advance to the sideboard, sweep all the plate into a basket, and deliver it to the bishop's butler, with a charge to carry it off to a place of security.[1]

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The French officers, with the detachment left under their orders by the commander-in-chief, staid about one month at Killala. This period allowed opportunities enough for observing individual differences of character, and the general tone of their manners. These opportunities were not thrown away upon the bishop: he noticed with a critical eye, and he recorded on the spot, whatever fell within his own experience. Had he, however, happened to be a political or courtier bishop, his record would, perhaps, have been suppressed; and at any rate it would have been coloured by prejudice. As it was, I believe it to have been the honest testimony of an honest man; and, considering the minute circumstantiality of its delineations, I do not believe that, throughout the revolutionary war, any one document was made public which throws so much light on the quality and composition of the French Republican armies. On this consideration I shall extract a few passages from the bishop's personal sketches.[1]

The Commander-in-chief of the French armament is thus delineated by the bishop:—

"Humbert, the leader of this singular body of men, was himself as extraordinary a personage as any in his army. Of a good height and shape, in the full vigour of life, prompt to decide, quick in execution, apparently master of his art, you could not refuse him the praise of a good officer, while his physiognomy forbade you to like him as a man. His eye, which was small and sleepy, cast a sidelong glance of insidiousness and even of cruelty; it was the eye of a cat preparing to spring upon her prey. His education and manners were indicative of a person sprung from the lower

ance with the French scenical mode of arranging their public acts for purposes of effect. Cynical people (like myself, when looking back to this anecdote from the year 1833) were too apt to remark that this plate and that basket were carefully numbered; that the episcopal butler (like Pharaoh's) was liable, alas! to be hanged, in case the plate were not forthcoming on a summons from head-quarters: and that the Killala "place of security" was kindly strengthened, under the maternal anxiety of the French Republic, by doubling the French sentries.

[1] "A Narrative of what passed at Killala in the County of Mayo and the parts adjacent during the French Invasion in 1798. By an Eyewitness." London, 1800.—M.

orders of society ; though he knew how to assume, when it was convenient, the deportment of a gentleman. For learning, he had scarcely enough to enable him to write his name. His passions were furious ; and all his behaviour seemed marked with the character of roughness and insolence. A narrower observation of him, however, seemed to discover that much of his roughness was the result of art, being assumed with the view of extorting by terror a ready compliance with his commands. Of this truth the bishop himself was one of the first who had occasion to be made sensible."

The particular occasion here alluded to by the bishop arose out of the first attempts to effect the disembarkation of the military stores and equipments from the French shipping, as also to forward them when landed. The case was one of extreme urgency ; and proportionate allowance must be made for the French general. Every moment might bring the British cruisers in sight—two important expeditions had already been baffled in that way : and the absolute certainty, known to all parties alike, that delay, under these circumstances, was tantamount to ruin ; that upon a difference of ten or fifteen minutes, this way or that, might happen to hinge the whole issue of the expedition ;—such a consciousness gave unavoidably to every demur at this critical moment the colour of treachery. Neither boats, nor carts, nor horses, could be obtained ; the owners most imprudently and selfishly retiring from that service. Such being the extremity, the French general made the bishop responsible for the execution of his orders : but the bishop had really no means to enforce this commission, and failed. Upon that, General Humbert threatened to send his lordship, together with his whole family, prisoners of war to France, and assumed the air of a man violently provoked. Here came the crisis for determining the bishop's weight amongst his immediate flock, and his hold upon their affections One great bishop, not far off, would, on such a trial, have been exultingly consigned to his fate : that I well know ; for Lord Westport and I, merely as his visitors, were attacked in the dusk so fiercely with stones, that we were obliged to forbear going out, unless in broad daylight. Luckily the

Bishop of Killala had shown himself a Christian pastor, and now he reaped the fruits of his goodness. The public selfishness gave way, when the danger of the bishop was made known. The boats, the carts, the horses, were now liberally brought in from their lurking-places; the artillery and stores were landed; and the drivers of the carts, &c., were paid in drafts upon the Irish Directory, which (if it were an aerial coin) served at least to mark an unwillingness in the enemy to adopt violent modes of hostility, and ultimately became available in the very character assigned to them by the French general; not, indeed, as drafts upon the rebel, but as claims upon the equity of the English Government.

The officer left in command at Killala, when the presence of the commander-in-chief was required elsewhere, bore the name of Charost. He was a lieutenant-colonel, aged forty-five years, the son of a Parisian watchmaker. Having been sent over at an early age to the unhappy island of St. Domingo, with a view to some connections there by which he hoped to profit, he had been fortunate enough to marry a young woman who brought him a plantation for her dowry which was reputed to have yielded him a revenue of £2000 sterling per annum. But this, of course, all went to wreck in one day, upon that mad decree of the French Convention which proclaimed liberty without distinction, without restrictions, and without gradations, to the unprepared and ferocious negroes.[1] Even his wife and daughter would have perished simultaneously with his property, but for English protection, which delivered them from the black sabre, and transferred them to Jamaica. There, however, though safe, they were, as respected Colonel Charost, unavoidably captives; and "his eyes would fill," says the bishop, "when he told the family that he had not seen these dear relatives for six years past, nor even had tidings of them for the last three years." On his return to France, finding that to have been a watchmaker's son was no

[1] I leave this passage as it was written originally under an impression then universally current. But, from what I have since read on this subject, I beg to be considered as speaking very doubtfully on the true causes of the St. Domingo disasters.

longer a bar to the honours of the military profession, he had entered the army, and had risen by merit to the rank which he now held. "He had a plain, good understanding. He seemed careless or doubtful of revealed religion; but said that he believed in God; was inclined to think that there must be a future state; and was very sure that, while he lived in this world, it was his duty to do all the good to his fellow-creatures that he could. Yet what he did not exhibit in his own conduct, he appeared to respect in others; for he took care that no noise or disturbance should be made in the castle [*i.e.*, the bishop's palace] on Sundays, while the family, and many Protestants from the town, were assembled in the library at their devotions.

"Boudet, the next in command, was a captain of foot, twenty-eight years old. His father, he said, was still living, though sixty-seven years old when he was born. His height was six feet two inches. In person, complexion, and gravity, he was no inadequate representation of the Knight of La Mancha, whose example he followed in a recital of his own prowess and wonderful exploits, delivered in measured language and an imposing seriousness of aspect." The bishop represents him as vain and irritable, but distinguished by good feeling and principle. Another officer was Ponson, described as five feet six inches high, lively and animated in excess, volatile, noisy, and chattering, *a l'outrance*. "He was hardy," says the bishop, "and patient to admiration of labour and want of rest." And of this last quality the following wonderful illustration is given :—"A continued watching of *five days and nights together*, when the rebels were growing desperate for prey and mischief, *did not appear to sink his spirits in the smallest degree*."

Contrasting with the known rapacity of the French Republican army in *all* its ranks the severe honesty of these particular officers, we must come to the conclusion, either that they had been *selected* for their tried qualities of abstinence and self-control, or else that the perilous tenure of their footing in Ireland had coerced them into forbearance. Of this same Ponson, the last described, the bishop declares, that "he was strictly honest, and could not bear the absence of this quality in others; so that his patience was pretty well

tried by his Irish allies." At the same time, he expressed his contempt for religion in a way which the bishop saw reason for ascribing to vanity—"the miserable affectation of appearing worse than he really was." One officer there was, named *Truc*, whose brutality recalled the impression, so disadvantageous to French republicanism, which else had been partially effaced by the manners and conduct of his comrades. To him the bishop (and not the bishop only, but many of my own informants, to whom Truc had been familiarly known) ascribes "a front of brass, an incessant fraudful smile, manners altogether vulgar, and in his dress and person a neglect of cleanliness even beyond the affected negligence of republicans."

Truc, however, happily, was not leader; and the principles or the policy of his superiors prevailed. To them, not merely in their own conduct, but also in their way of applying that influence which they held over their most bigoted allies, the Protestants of Connaught were under deep obligations. Speaking merely as to property, the honest bishop renders the following justice to the enemy:—"And here it would be an act of great injustice to the excellent discipline constantly maintained by these invaders while they remained in our town, not to remark that, with every temptation to plunder which the time and the number of valuable articles within their reach presented to them in the bishop's palace, from a sideboard of plate and glasses, a hall filled with hats, whips, and greatcoats, as well of the guests as of the family, not a single particular of private property was found to have been carried away, when the owners, after the first fright, came to look for their effects, which was not for a day or two after the landing." Even in matters of delicacy the same forbearance was exhibited:—"Beside the entire use of other apartments, during the stay of the French in Killala, the attic storey, containing a library, and three bedchambers, continued sacred to the bishop and his family. And so scrupulous was the delicacy of the French not to disturb the female part of the house, that not one of them was ever seen to go higher than the middle floor, except on the evening of the success at Castlebar, when two officers begged leave to carry to the family the news of the battle; and seemed a

little mortified that the news was received with an air of dissatisfaction." These, however, were not the weightiest instances of that eminent service which the French had it in their power to render on this occasion. The royal army behaved ill in every sense. Liable to continual panics in the field—panics which, but for the overwhelming force accumulated, and the discretion of Lord Cornwallis, would have been fatal to the good cause—the royal forces erred, as unthinkingly, in the abuse of any momentary triumph. Forgetting that the rebels held many hostages in their hands, they at once recommenced the old system practised in Wexford and Kildare, of hanging and shooting without trial, and without a thought of the horrible reprisals that might be adopted. These reprisals, but for the fortunate influence of the French commanders, and but for their great energy in applying that influence according to the exigencies of time and place, would have been made: it cost the whole weight of the French power, their influence was stretched almost to breaking, before they could accomplish their purpose of neutralising the senseless cruelty of the royalists, and of saving the trembling Protestants. Dreadful were the anxieties of these moments: and I myself heard persons, at a distance of nearly two years, declare that their lives hung at that time by a thread; and that, but for the hasty approach of the Lord-Lieutenant by forced marches, that thread would have snapped. "We heard with panic," said they, "of the madness which characterised the proceedings of our *soi-disant* friends: and, for any chance of safety, unavoidably we looked only to our nominal enemies—the staff of the French army."

One story was still current, and very frequently repeated, at the time of my own residence upon the scene of these transactions. It would not be fair to mention it, without saying, at the same time, that the Bishop, whose discretion was so much impeached by the affair, had the candour to blame himself most heavily, and always applauded the rebel for the lesson he had given him. The case was this:—Day after day the royal forces had been accumulating upon military posts in the neighbourhood of Killala, and could be descried from elevated stations in that town. Stories

travelled simultaneously to Killala, every hour, of the atrocities which marked their advance ; many, doubtless, being fictions, either of blind hatred, or of that ferocious policy which sought to make the rebels desperate, by tempting them into the last extremities of guilt, but, unhappily, too much countenanced, as to their general outline, by excesses on the royal part, already proved, and undeniable. The ferment and the anxiety increased every hour amongst the rebel occupants of Killala. The French had no power to protect, beyond the moral one of their influence as allies ; and, in the very crisis of this alarming situation, a rebel came to the Bishop, with the news that the royal cavalry was at that moment advancing from Sligo, and could be traced along the country by the line of blazing houses which accompanied their march. The Bishop doubted this, and expressed his doubt. "Come with me," said the rebel. It was a matter of policy to yield, and his lordship went. They ascended together the Needle-tower-hill, from the summit of which the bishop now discovered that the fierce rebel had spoken but too truly. A line of smoke and fire ran over the country in the rear of a strong patrol detached from the King's forces. The moment was critical ; the rebel's eye expressed the unsettled state of his feelings ; and at that instant the imprudent bishop uttered a sentiment which, to his dying day, he could not forget. "They," said he, meaning the ruined houses, "are only wretched cabins." The rebel mused, and for a few moments seemed in self-conflict —a dreadful interval to the Bishop, who became sensible of his own extreme imprudence the very moment after the words had escaped him. However, the man contented himself with saying, after a pause, "A poor man's cabin is to him as dear as a palace." It is probable that this retort was far from expressing the deep moral indignation at his heart, though his readiness of mind failed to furnish him with any other more stinging ; and, in such cases, all depends upon the first movement of vindictive feeling being broken. The Bishop, however, did not forget the lesson he had received ; nor did he fail to blame himself most heavily, not so much for his imprudence, as for his thoughtless adoption of a language expressing an aristocratic hauteur that did not

belong to his real character. There was, indeed, at that moment, no need that fresh fuel should be applied to the irritation of the rebels; they had already declared their intention of plundering the town; and, as they added, "in spite of the French," whom they now regarded, and openly denounced, as "abetters of the Protestants," much more than as their own allies.

Justice, however, must be done to the rebels, as well as to their military associates. If they were disposed to plunder, they were found generally to shrink from bloodshed and cruelty; and yet from no want of energy or determination. "The peasantry never appeared to want animal courage," says the Bishop, "for they flocked together to meet danger whenever it was expected. Had it pleased Heaven to be as liberal to them of brains as of hands, it is not easy to say to what length of mischief they might have proceeded; but they were all along unprovided with leaders of any ability." This, I believe, was true; and yet it would be doing poor justice to the Connaught rebels, nor would it be drawing the moral truly as respects this aspect of the rebellion, if their abstinence from mischief, in its worst form, were to be explained out of this defect in their leaders. Nor is it possible to suppose *that* the Bishop's meaning, though his words seem to tend that way. For he himself elsewhere notices the absence of all wanton bloodshed as a feature of this Connaught rebellion most honourable in itself to the poor misguided rebels, and as distinguishing it very remarkably from the greater insurrection so recently crushed in the centre and the east. "It is a circumstance," says he, "worthy of particular notice, that, during the whole time of this civil commotion, not a single drop of blood was shed by the Connaught rebels, except in the field of war. It is true, the example and influence of the French went a great way to prevent sanguinary excesses. But it will not be deemed fair to ascribe to this cause alone the forbearance of which we were witnesses, when it is considered what a range of country lay at the mercy of the rebels for several days after the French power was known to be at an end."

To what, then, *are* we to ascribe the forbearance of the Connaught men, so singularly contrasted with the hideous

excesses of their brethren in the east? Solely to the different complexion (so, at least, I was told) of the policy pursued by government. In Wexford, Kildare, Meath, Dublin, &c., it had been judged advisable to adopt, as a sort of precautionary policy, not for the punishment, but for the discovery of rebellious purposes, measures of the direst severity; not merely free-quarterings of the soldiery, with liberty (or even an express commission) to commit outrages and insults upon all who were suspected, upon all who refused to countenance such measures, upon all who presumed to question their justice; but even, under colour of martial law, to inflict croppings, and pitch-cappings, half-hangings, and the torture of "picketings"; to say nothing of houses burned, and farms laid waste—things which were done daily, and under military orders; the purpose avowed being either vengeance for some known act of insurrection, or the determination to extort confessions. Too often, however, as may well be supposed, in such utter disorganisation of society, private malice, either personal or on account of old family feuds, was the true principle at work. And many were thus driven, by mere frenzy of just indignation, or, perhaps, by mere desperation, into acts of rebellion which else they had not meditated. Now, in Connaught at this time the same barbarous policy was no longer pursued; and then it was seen that, unless maddened by ill usage, the peasantry were capable of great self-control. There was no repetition of the Enniscorthy massacres; and it was impossible to explain honestly *why* there was none, without, at the same time, reflecting back upon that atrocity some colour of palliation.

These things considered, it must be granted that there was a spirit of unjustifiable violence in the royal army on achieving their triumph. It is shocking, however, to observe the effect of panic to irritate the instincts of cruelty and sanguinary violence, even in the gentlest minds. I remember well, on occasion of the memorable tumults in Bristol (autumn of 1831), that I, for my part, could not read without horror and indignation one statement (made, I believe, officially at that time), which yet won the cordial approbation of some ladies who had participated in the panic. I allude to that part of the report which represents several

of the dragoons as having dismounted, resigned the care of their horses to persons in the street, and pursued the unhappy fugitives, criminals, undoubtedly, but no longer dangerous, up-stairs and down-stairs, to the last nook of their retreat. The worst criminals could not be known and identified as such; and, even in a case where they could, vengeance so hellish and so unrelenting was not justified by houses burned or by momentary panics raised. Scenes of the same description were beheld upon the first triumph of the royal cause in Connaught; and but for Lord Cornwallis, equally firm before his success and moderate in its exercise, they would have prevailed more extensively. The poor rebels were pursued with a needless ferocity on the recapture of Killala. So hotly, indeed, did some of the conquerors hang upon the footsteps of the fugitives, that both rushed almost simultaneously—pursuers and pursued—into the terror-stricken houses of Killala; and, in some instances, the ball meant for a rebel told with mortal effect upon a royalist. Here, indeed, as in other cases of this rebellion, in candour it should be mentioned, that the royal army was composed chiefly of militia regiments. Not that militia, or regiments composed chiefly of men who had but just before volunteered for the line, have not often made unexceptionable soldiers, but in this case there was no reasonable proportion of veterans, or men who had seen any service. The Bishop of Killala was assured by an intelligent officer of the king's army, that the victors were within a trifle of being beaten. I was myself told by a gentleman who rode as a volunteer on that day, that, to the best of his belief, it was merely a mistaken order of the rebel chiefs, causing a false application of a select reserve at a very critical moment, which had saved his own party from a ruinous defeat. It may be added, upon almost universal testimony, that the re-capture of Killala was abused, not only as respected the defeated rebels, but also as respected the royalists of that town. "The regiments that came to their assistance, being all militia, seemed to think that they had a right to take the property they had been the means of preserving, and to use it as their own whenever they stood in need of it. Their rapacity differed in no respect from that of the rebels, except that they seized upon

things with less of ceremony and excuse, and that his majesty's soldiers were incomparably superior to the Irish traitors in dexterity at stealing. In consequence, the town grew very weary of their guests, and were glad to see them march off to other quarters."

The military operations in this brief campaign were discreditable, in the last degree, to the energy, to the vigilance, and to the steadiness of the Orange army. Humbert had been a leader against the royalists of La Vendée, as well as on the Rhine; consequently he was an ambidextrous enemy —fitted equally for partisan warfare, and for the tactics of regular armies. Keenly alive to the necessity, under *his* circumstances, of vigour and despatch, after occupying Killala on the evening of the 22d August (the day of his disembarkation), where the small garrison of 50 men (yeomen and fencibles) had made a tolerable resistance, and after other trifling affairs, he had, on the 26th, marched against Castlebar with about 800 of his own men, and perhaps 1200 to 1500 of the rebels. Here was the advanced post of the royal army. General Lake (the Lord Lake of India) and Major-General Hutchinson (the Lord Hutchinson of Egypt) had assembled upon this point a respectable force; some say upwards of 4000—others, not more than 1100. The disgraceful result is well known: the French, marching all night over mountain roads, and through one pass which was thought impregnable if it had been occupied by a battalion instead of a captain's guard, surprised Castlebar on the morning of the 27th. *Surprised*, I say, for no word short of *that* can express the circumstances of the case. About two o'clock in the morning, a courier had brought intelligence of the French advance; but, from some unaccountable obstinacy at head-quarters, such as had proved fatal more than either once or twice in the Wexford campaign, his news was disbelieved; yet, if disbelieved, why therefore neglected? Neglected, however, it was; and at seven, when the news proved to be true, the royal army was drawn out in hurry and confusion to meet the enemy. The French, on their part, seeing our strength, looked for no better result to themselves than summary surrender; more especially as our artillery was well served, and soon began to tell upon their

ranks. Better hopes first arose, as they afterwards declared, upon observing that many of the troops fired in a disorderly way, without waiting for the word of command ; upon this they took new measures : in a few minutes a panic arose ; General Lake ordered a retreat ; and then, in spite of all that could be done by the indignant officers, the flight became irretrievable. The troops reached Tuam, thirty miles distant, on that same day ; and one small party of mounted men actually pushed on to Athlone, which is above sixty miles from the field of battle. Fourteen pieces of artillery were lost on this occasion. However, it ought to be mentioned that some serious grounds appeared afterwards for suspecting treachery : most of those who had been reported "missing" having been afterwards observed in the ranks of the enemy, where it is remarkable enough (or perhaps *not* so remarkable, as simply implying how little they were trusted by their new allies, and for that reason how naturally they were put forward on the most dangerous services) that these deserters perished to a man. Meantime, the new Lord-Lieutenant, having his foot constantly in the stirrup, marched from Dublin without a moment's delay. By means of the grand canal, he made a forced march of fifty-six English miles in two days ; which brought him to Kilbeggan on the 27th. Very early on the following morning, he received the unpleasant news from Castlebar. Upon this he advanced to Athlone, meeting every indication of a routed and panicstruck army. Lord Lake was retreating upon that town, and thought himself (*it is said*) so little secure even at this distance from the enemy, that the road from Tuam was covered with strong patrols. On the other hand, in ludicrous contrast to these demonstrations of alarm (*supposing them to be related without exaggeration*), the French had never stirred from Castlebar. On the 4th of September, Lord Cornwallis was within fourteen miles of that place. Humbert, however, had previously dislodged towards the County of Longford. His motive for this movement was to co-operate with an insurrection in that quarter, which had just then broken out in strength. He was now, however, hemmed in by a large army of perhaps 25,000 men, advancing from all points ; and a few moves were all that remained of the game, played with

whatever skill. Colonel Vereker, with about 300 of the Limerick Militia, first came up with him, and skirmished very creditably (September 6) with part, or (as the colonel always maintained) with the whole of the French army. Other affairs of trivial importance followed; and at length, on the 8th of September, General Humbert surrendered with his whole army, now reduced to 844 men, of whom 96 were officers; having lost since their landing at Killala exactly 288 men. The rebels were not admitted to any terms; they were pursued and cut down without mercy. However, it is pleasant to know that, from their agility in escaping, this cruel policy was defeated: not much above 500 perished: and thus were secured to the royal party the worst results of vengeance the fiercest, and of clemency the most undistinguishing, without any one advantage of either. Some districts, as Laggan and Eris, were treated with martial rigour; the cabins being burned, and their unhappy tenants driven out into the mountains for the winter. Rigour, therefore, there was; for the most humane politicians, erroneously, as one must believe, fancied it necessary for the army to leave behind some impressions of terror amongst the insurgents. It is certain, however, that, under the counsels of Lord Cornwallis, the standards of public severity were very much lowered, as compared with the previous examples in Wexford.

The tardiness and slovenly execution of the whole service, meantime, was well illustrated in what follows:—

Killala was not delivered from rebel hands until the 23d of September, notwithstanding the general surrender had occurred on the 8th; and then only in consequence of an express from the Bishop to General Trench, hastening his march. The situation of the Protestants was indeed critical. Humbert had left three French officers to protect the place, but their influence had gradually sunk to a shadow. And plans of pillage, with all its attendant horrors, were daily debated. Under these circumstances, the French officers behaved honourably and courageously. "Yet," says the Bishop, "the poor commandant had no reason to be pleased with the treatment he had received immediately after the action. He had returned to the castle for his sabre, and

advanced with it to the gate, in order to deliver it up to some English officer, when it was seized and forced from his hand by a common soldier of Fraser's. He came in, got another sword, which he surrendered to an officer, and turned to re-enter the hall. At this moment a second Highlander burst through the gate, in spite of the sentinel placed there by the general, and fired at the commandant with an aim that was near proving fatal, for the ball passed under his arm, piercing a very thick door entirely through, and lodging in the jamb. Had we lost the worthy man by such an accident, his death would have spoiled the whole relish of our present enjoyment. He complained, and received an apology for the soldier's behaviour from his officer. Leave was immediately granted to the three French officers (left behind by Humbert at Killala) to keep their swords, their effects, and even their bedchambers in the house."

☞ *Note applying generally to this chapter on the Second Irish Rebellion.*—Already in 1833, when writing this chapter, I felt a secret jealousy (intermittingly recurring) that possibly I might have fallen under a false bias at this point of my youthful memorials. I myself had seen reason to believe, indeed sometimes I knew for certain, that, in the *personalities* of Irish politics, from Grattan downwards, a spirit of fiery misrepresentation prevailed, which made it hopeless to seek for anything resembling truth. If in any quarter you found candour and liberality, *that* was because no interest existed in anything Irish, and consequently no real information. Find out any man that could furnish you with information such as presupposed an interest in Ireland, and inevitably he turned out a bigoted partisan. There cannot be a stronger proof of this than the ridiculous libels and literary caricatures current even in England, through one whole generation, against the late Lord Londonderry—a most able and faithful manager of our English foreign interests in times of unparalleled difficulty. Already, in the closing years of the last century, his Irish policy had been inextricably falsified: subsequently, when he came to assume a leading part in the English Parliament, the efforts to calumniate him became even more intense: and it is only within the last five years that a reaction of public opinion on this subject has been strong enough to reach even those among his enemies who were enlightened men. Liberal journals (such, *e.g.*, as the "North British Review") now recognise his merits. Naturally it was impossible that the civil war of 1798 in Ireland, and the persons conspicuously connected with it, should escape this general destiny of Irish politics. I wrote, therefore, originally under a jealousy that partially I might have been duped. At present, in reviewing what I had written twenty years ago, I feel this jealousy much more keenly. I shrink from the Bishop's

malicious portraitures of our soldiers, sometimes of their officers, as composing a licentious army, without discipline, without humanity, without even steady courage. Has any man a right to ask our toleration for pictures so romantic as these? Duped, perhaps, I was myself: and it was natural that I should be so under the overwhelming influences oppressing any right that I *could* have at my early age to a free independent judgment. But I will not any longer assist in duping the reader: and I will therefore suggest to him two grounds of vehement suspicion against all the insidious colourings given to his statements by the Bishop:—

1. I beg to remind the reader that this army of Mayo, in 1798, so unsteady and so undisciplined, if we believe the Bishop, was, in part, the army of Egypt in the year 1801: how would the Bishop have answered *that?*

2. The Bishop allows great weight, in treating any allegations whatever against the English army or the English Government, to the moderation, equity, and self-control, claimed for the Irish peasantry as notorious elements in their character. Meantime he forgets this doctrine most conspicuously at times; and represents the safety of the Protestants against pillage, or even against a spirit of massacre, as entirely dependent on the influence of the French. Whether for property or life, it was to the French that the Irish Protestants looked for protection: not I it is, but the Bishop, on whom that representation will be found to rest.

CHAPTER XII

TRAVELLING IN ENGLAND IN OLD DAYS[1]

It was late in October, or early in November, that I quitted Connaught with Lord Westport; and very slowly, making many leisurely deviations from the direct route, travelled back to Dublin. Thence, after some little stay, we recrossed St. George's Channel; landed at Holyhead; and then, by exactly the same route as we had pursued in early June, we posted through Bangor, Conway, Llanrwst, Llangollen, until once again we found ourselves in England; and, as a matter of course, making for Birmingham. But why making for Birmingham? Simply because Birmingham, under the old dynasty of stage-coaches and post-chaises, was the centre of our travelling system, and held in England something of that rank which the golden milestone of Rome held in the Italian peninsula.

At Birmingham it was (which I, like myriads beside, had traversed a score of times, without ever yet having visited it as a *terminus ad quem*) that I parted with my friend Lord Westport. *His* route lay through Oxford; and stopping, therefore, no longer than was necessary to harness fresh horses—an operation, however, which was seldom accomplished in less than half-an-hour at that era—he went on

[1] There are snatches in this chapter from the papers in *Tait's Magazine* for May 1834 and August 1834; but it is mainly from an article of De Quincey's in an extra number of *Tait* for December 1834. De Quincey's own title to the chapter was simply "Travelling"; but "Travelling in England in Old Days" is more precise.—M.

directly to Stratford. My own destination was yet doubtful. I had been directed, in Dublin, to inquire at the Birmingham Post-office for a letter which would guide my motions. There, accordingly, upon sending for it, lay the expected letter from my mother; from which I learned that my sister was visiting at Laxton, in Northamptonshire, the seat of an old friend, to which I also had an invitation. My route to this lay through Stamford. Thither I could not go by a stage-coach until the following day; and of necessity I prepared to make the most of my present day in gloomy, noisy, and, at that time, dirty Birmingham.

Be not offended, compatriot of Birmingham, that I salute your natal town with these disparaging epithets. It is not my habit to indulge rash impulses of contempt towards any man or body of men, wheresoever collected, far less towards a race of high-minded and most intelligent citizens, such as Birmingham has exhibited to the admiration of all Europe. But as to the noise and the gloom which I ascribe to you, those features of your town will illustrate what the Germans mean by a *one-sided*[1] (ein-seitiger) judgment. There are, I can well believe, thousands to whom Birmingham is another name for domestic peace, and for a reasonable share of sunshine. But in my case, who have passed through Birmingham a hundred times, it always happened to rain, except once; and that once the Shrewsbury mail carried me so rapidly away, that I had not time to examine the sunshine, or see whether it might not be some gilt Birmingham counterfeit; for you know, men of Birmingham, that you *can* counterfeit—such is your cleverness—all things in heaven and earth, from Jove's thunder-bolts down to a tailor's bodkin. Therefore, the gloom is to be charged to my bad luck. Then, as to the noise, never did I sleep at that enormous *Hen and Chickens*,[2] to which usually my

[1] It marks the rapidity with which new phrases float themselves into currency under our present omnipresence of the press, that this word *now* (viz., in 1853) familiarly used in every newspaper, *then* (viz., in 1833) required a sort of apology to warrant its introduction.

[2] A well-known hotel, and also a coach-inn, which we English in those days thought colossal. It was, in fact, according to the spirit of Dr. Johnson's witty reply to Miss Knight, big enough for an island. But our Transatlantic brothers, dwelling upon so mighty a

destiny brought me, but I had reason to complain that the discreet hen did not gather her vagrant flock to roost at less variable hours. Till two or three, I was kept waking by those who were retiring; and about three commenced the morning functions of the porter, or of "boots," or of "under-

continent, have gradually enlarged their scale of inns, as of other objects, into a size of commensurate grandeur. In two separate New York journals, which, by the kindness of American friends, are at this moment (April 26) lying before me, I read astounding illustrations of this:—For instance (1.) In "Putnam's Monthly" for April 1853, the opening article, a very amusing one, entitled "New York Daguerreotyped," estimates the *hotel* population of that vast city as "not much short of ten thousand"; and one individual hotel, apparently far from being the most conspicuous—viz., the *Metropolitan*, reputed to have "more than twelve miles of water and gas pipe, and two hundred and fifty servants"—offers "accommodations for one thousand guests." (2.) Yet even this Titanic structure dwindles by comparison with the *Mount Vernon Hotel* at Cape May, N. J. (meant, I suppose, for New Jersey), which advertises itself in the "New York Herald" of April 12, 1853, under the authority of Mr. J. Taber, its aspiring landlord, as offering accommodations, from the 20th of next June, to the romantic number of *three thousand five hundred* guests. The Birmingham *Hen and Chickens* undoubtedly had slight pretensions by the side of these Behemoths and Mammoths. And yet, as a street in a very little town may happen to be quite as noisy as a street in London, I can testify that any single gallery in this Birmingham hotel, if measured in importance by the elements of discomfort which it *could* develop, was entitled to an American rating. But alas! *Fuit Ilium;* I have not seen the ruins of this ancient hotel: but an instinct tells me that the railroad has run right through it; that the hen has ceased to lay golden eggs, and that her chickens are dispersed. (3.) As another illustration, I may mention that, in the middle of March 1853, I received, as a present from New York, the following newspaper. Each page contained eleven columns, whereas our London "Times" contains only six. It was entitled "The New York Journal of Commerce," and was able to proclaim itself with truth the largest journal in the world. For 25½ years it had existed in a smaller size, but even in this infant stage had so far outrun all other journals in size (measuring, from the first, 816 square inches), as to have earned the name of "*the blanket sheet*": but this thriving baby had continued to grow, until at last, on March 1, 1853, it came out in a sheet "comprising an area of 2057¼ square inches, or 16⅔ square feet." This was the monster sent over the Atlantic to myself: and I really felt it as some relief to my terror, when I found the editor protesting that the monster should not be allowed to grow any more. I presume that it was meant to keep the hotels in countenance; for a journal on the old scale could not expect to make itself visible in an edifice that offered accommodations to an army.

boots," who began their rounds for collecting the several freights for the Highflyer, or the Tallyho, or the Bang-up, to all points of the compass, and too often (as must happen in such immense establishments) blundered into my room with that appalling, "Now, sir, the horses are coming out." So that rarely, indeed, have I happened to *sleep* in Birmingham. But the dirt!—*that* sticks a little with you, friend of Birmingham. How do I explain away *that?* Know, then, reader, that at the time I speak of, and in the way I speak of—viz., in streets and inns—all England was dirty.

Being left therefore alone for the whole of a rainy day in Birmingham, and Birmingham being as yet the centre of our travelling system, I cannot do better than spend my Birmingham day in reviewing the most lively of its reminiscences.

The revolution in the whole apparatus, means, machinery, and dependencies of that system—a revolution begun, carried through, and perfected within the period of my own personal experience—merits a word or two of illustration in the most cursory memoirs that profess any attention at all to the shifting scenery and moving forces of the age, whether manifested in great effects or in little. And these particular effects, though little when regarded in their separate details, are *not* little in their final amount. On the contrary, I have always maintained, that under a representative government, where the great cities of the empire must naturally have the power, each in its proportion, of re-acting upon the capital and the councils of the nation in so conspicuous a way, there is a result waiting on the final improvements of the arts of travelling, and of transmitting intelligence with velocity, such as cannot be properly appreciated in the absence of all historical experience. Conceive a state of communication between the centre and the extremities of a great people, kept up with a uniformity of reciprocation so exquisite, as to imitate the flowing and ebbing of the sea, or the systole and diastole of the human heart; day and night, waking and sleeping, not succeeding to each other with more absolute certainty than the acts of the metropolis and the controlling notice of the provinces, whether in the way of

support or of resistance. Action and re-action from every point of the compass being thus perfect and instantaneous, we should then first begin to understand, in a practical sense, what is meant by the unity of a political body, and we should approach to a more adequate appreciation of the powers which are latent in organisation. For it must be considered that hitherto, under the most complex organisation, and that which has best attained its purposes, the national will has never been able to express itself upon one in a thousand of the public acts, simply because the national voice was lost in the distance, and could not collect itself through the time and the space rapidly enough to connect itself immediately with the evanescent measure of the moment. But, as the system of intercourse is gradually expanding, these bars of space and time are in the same degree contracting, until finally we may expect them altogether to vanish: and then every part of the empire will react upon the whole with the power, life, and effect of immediate conference amongst parties brought face to face. Then first will be seen a political system truly *organic—i.e.*, in which each acts upon all, and all react upon each: and a new earth will arise from the indirect agency of this merely physical revolution. Already, in this paragraph, written twenty years ago, a prefiguring instinct spoke within me of some great secret yet to come in the art of distant communication. At present I am content to regard the electric telegraph as the oracular response to that prefiguration. But I still look for some higher and transcendent response.

The reader whose birth attaches him to this present generation, having known only macadamised roads, cannot easily bring before his imagination the antique and almost aboriginal state of things which marked our travelling system down to the end of the eighteenth century, and nearly through the first decennium of the present. A very few lines will suffice for some broad notices of our condition, in this respect, through the last two centuries. In the Parliamentary War (1642-46), it is an interesting fact, but at the same time calculated to mislead the incautious reader, that some officers of distinction, on both sides, brought close carriages to head-quarters; and sometimes they went even

upon the field of battle in these carriages, not mounting on horseback until the preparations were beginning for some important manœuvre, or for a general movement. The same thing had been done throughout the Thirty Years' War, both by the Bavarian, Imperial, and afterwards by the Swedish officers of rank. And it marks the great diffusion of these luxuries about this era, that, on occasion of the re-instalment of two princes of Mecklenburg, who had been violently dispossessed by Wallenstein, upwards of eighty coaches mustered at a short notice, partly from the territorial nobility, partly from the camp. Precisely, however, at military head-quarters, and on the route of an army, carriages of this description were an available and a most useful means of transport. Cumbrous and unwieldy they were, as we know by pictures, and they could not have been otherwise, for they were built to meet the roads. Carriages of our present light and *reedy* (almost, one might say, *corky*) construction would, on the roads of Germany or of England in that age, have foundered within the first two hours. To our ancestors, such carriages would have seemed playthings for children. Cumbrous as the carriages of that day were, they could not be more so than artillery or baggage waggons: where these could go, coaches could go. So that, in the march of an army, there was a perpetual guarantee to those who had coaches for the possibility of their transit. And hence, and not because the roads were at all better than they have been generally described in those days, we are to explain the fact, that both in the royal camp, in Lord Manchester's, and afterwards in General Fairfax's and Cromwell's, coaches were an ordinary part of the camp equipage. The roads, meantime, were as they have been described—viz., ditches, morasses, and sometimes channels for the course of small brooks. Nor did they improve, except for short reaches, and under peculiar local advantages, throughout that century. Spite of the roads, however, public carriages began to pierce England, in various lines, from the era of 1660. Circumstantial notices of these may be found in Lord Auckland's (Sir Frederick Eden's) large work on the Poor-Laws. That to York, for example (two hundred miles), took a fortnight in the journey, or

about fourteen miles a-day. But Chamberlayne, who had a personal knowledge of these public carriages, says enough to show that, if slow, they were cheap ; half-a-crown being the usual rate for fifteen miles (*i.e.*, 2d. a mile). Public conveyances, multiplying rapidly, could not but diffuse a general call for improved roads ; improved both in dimensions and also in the art of construction. For it is observable that, so early as Queen Elizabeth's days, England, the most equestrian of nations, already presented to its inhabitants a general system of decent bridle-roads. Even at this day, it is doubtful whether any man, taking all hindrances into account, and having laid no previous relays of horses, could much exceed the exploit of Cary (afterwards Lord Monmouth), a younger son of the first Lord Hunsden, a cousin of Queen Elizabeth. Yet we must not forget that the particular road concerned in this exploit was the Great North Road (as it is still called by way of distinction), lying through Doncaster and York, between the northern and southern capitals of the island.[1] But roads less frequented were tolerable as bridle-roads ; whilst all alike, having been originally laid down with no view to the broad and ample coaches, from 1570 to 1700, scratched the panels on each side as they crept along. Even in the nineteenth century, I have known a case in the sequestered district of Egremont in Cumberland, where a post-chaise, of the common narrow dimensions, was obliged to retrace its route of fourteen miles on coming to a bridge built in some remote age, when as yet post-chaises were neither known nor anticipated, and, unfortunately, too narrow by three or four inches. In all the provinces of England, when the soil was deep and adhesive, a worse evil beset the stately equipage. An Italian of rank, who has left a record of his perilous adventure, visited, or attempted to visit, Petworth, near London (then a seat of the Percys, now of Lord Egremont), about the year 1685. I forget

[1] The exploit to which De Quincey here refers seems to be the prodigious ride of Sir Robert Cary in March 1603 from Richmond to Holyrood to announce to the Scottish king, James VI, that Queen Elizabeth was dead and that he was King of England. Starting from Richmond early on Thursday the 24th, Cary was at Holyrood on the evening of Saturday the 26th, anticipating the regular message from the English Privy Council by nearly two days.—M.

how many times he was overturned within one particular stretch of five miles; but I remember that it was a subject of gratitude (and, upon meditating a return by the same route, a subject of pleasing hope) to dwell upon the soft lying which was to be found in that good-natured morass. Yet this was, doubtless, a pet road (sinful punster! dream not that I glance at *Pet*worth), and an improved road. Such as this, I have good reason to think, were most of the roads in England, unless upon the rocky strata which stretch northwards from Derbyshire to Cumberland and Northumberland. The public carriages were the first harbingers of a change for the better; as these grew and prospered, slender lines of improvement began to vein and streak the map. And Parliament began to show their zeal, though not always a corresponding knowledge, by legislating backwards and forwards on the breadth of waggon wheel-tires, etc. But not until our cotton system began to put forth blossoms, not until our trade and our steam-engines began to stimulate the coal mines, which in *their* turn stimulated *them*, did any great energy apply itself to our roads. In my childhood, standing with one or two of my mother's carriage, I remember one unvarying set of images before us. The postilion (for so were all carriages then driven) was employed not by fits and starts, but always and eternally, in *quartering*[1]—*i.e.*, in crossing from side to side—according to the casualties of the ground. Before you stretched a wintry length of lane, with ruts deep enough to fracture the leg of a horse, filled to the brim with standing pools of rain water; and the collateral chambers of these ruts kept from becoming confluent by thin ridges, such as the Romans called *lirœ*, to maintain the footing upon which *lirœ*, so as not to swerve (or, as the Romans would say, *delirare*), was a trial of some skill both for the horses and their postilion. It was, indeed, next to impossible for any horse, on such a narrow crust of separation, not to grow *delirious* in the Roman metaphor; and the nervous anxiety which haunted me when a child was much fed by this very image so often before my eye, and the

[1] Elsewhere I have suggested, as the origin of this term, the French word *cartayer*, to manœuvre so as to evade the ruts.

sympathy with which I followed the motion of the docile creature's legs. Go to sleep at the beginning of a stage, and the last thing you saw—wake up, and the first thing you saw—was the line of wintry pools, the poor off-horse planting his steps with care, and the cautious postilion gently applying his spur, whilst manœuvring across this system of grooves with some sort of science that looked like a gipsy's palmistry; so equally unintelligible to me were his motions, in what he sought and in what he avoided.

Whilst reverting to these remembrances of my childhood, I may add, by way of illustration, and at the risk of gossiping, which, after all, is not the worst of things, a brief notice of my very first journey. I might be then seven years old. A young gentleman, the son of a wealthy banker, had to return home for the Christmas holidays to a town in Lincolnshire, distant from the public school where he was pursuing his education about a hundred miles. The school was in the neighbourhood of Greenhay, my father's house. There were at that time no coaches in that direction; now (1833) there are many every day. The young gentleman advertised for a person to share the expense of a post-chaise. By accident, I had an invitation of some standing to the same town, where I happened to have some female relatives of mature age, besides some youthful cousins. The two travellers elect soon heard of each other, and the arrangement was easily completed. It was my earliest migration from the paternal roof; and the anxieties of pleasure, too tumultuous, with some slight sense of undefined fears, combined to agitate my childish feelings. I had a vague slight apprehension of my fellow-traveller, whom I had never seen, and whom my nursery-maid, when dressing me, had described in no very amiable colours. But a good deal more I thought of Sherwood Forest (the forest of Robin Hood), which, as I had been told, we should cross after the night set in. At six o'clock I descended, and not, as usual, to the children's room, but, on this special morning of my life, to a room called the breakfast-room; where I found a blazing fire, candles lighted, and the whole breakfast equipage, as if for my mother, set out, to my astonishment, for no greater personage than myself. The scene being in England, and on

a December morning, I need scarcely say that it rained ; the rain beat violently against the windows ; the wind raved ; and an aged servant, who did the honours of the breakfast-table, pressed me urgently to eat. I need not say that I had no appetite : the fulness of my heart, both from busy anticipation, and from the parting which was at hand, had made me incapable of any other thought or attention but such as pointed to the coming journey. All circumstances in travelling, all scenes and situations of a representative and recurring character, are indescribably affecting, connected, as they have been, in so many myriads of minds, more especially in a land which is sending off for ever its flowers and blossoms to a clime so remote as that of India, with heartrending separations, and with farewells never to be repeated. But, amongst them all, none cleaves to my own feelings more indelibly, from having repeatedly been concerned, either as witness or as a principal party in its little drama, than the early breakfast on a wintry morning long before the darkness has given way, when the golden blaze of the hearth, and the bright glitter of candles, with female ministrations of gentleness more touching than on common occasions, all conspire to rekindle, as it were for a farewell gleam, the holy memorials of household affections. And many have, doubtless, had my feelings ; for I believe few readers will ever forget the beautiful manner in which Mrs. Inchbald has treated such a scene in winding up the first part of her "Simple Story," and the power with which she has invested it.

Years that seem innumerable have passed since that December morning in my own life to which I am now recurring ; and yet, even to this moment, I recollect the audible throbbing of heart, the leap and rushing of blood, which suddenly surprised me during a deep lull of the wind, when the aged attendant said, without hurry or agitation, but with something of a solemn tone, "That is the sound of wheels. I hear the chaise. Mr. H—— will be here directly." The road ran, for some distance, by a course pretty nearly equidistant from the house, so that the groaning of the wheels continued to catch the ear, as it swelled upon the wind, for some time without much alteration. At length a right-

angled turn brought the road continually and rapidly nearer to the gates of the grounds, which had purposely been thrown open. At this point, however, a long career of raving arose; all other sounds were lost; and for some time I began to think we had been mistaken, when suddenly the loud trampling of horses' feet, as they whirled up the sweep below the windows, followed by a peal long and loud upon the bell, announced, beyond question, the summons for my departure. The door being thrown open, steps were heard loud and fast; and in the next moment, ushered by a servant, stalked forward, booted and fully equipped, my travelling companion—if such a word can at all express the relation between the arrogant young blood, just fresh from assuming the *toga virilis*, and a modest child of profound sensibilities, but shy and reserved beyond even English reserve. The aged servant, with apparently constrained civility, presented my mother's compliments to him, with a request that he would take breakfast. This he hastily and rather peremptorily declined. Me, however, he condescended to notice with an approving nod, slightly inquiring if I were the young gentleman who shared his post-chaise. But, without allowing time for an answer, and striking his boot impatiently with a riding-whip, he hoped I was ready. "Not until he has gone up to my mistress," replied my old protectress, in a tone of some asperity. Thither I ascended. What counsels and directions I might happen to receive at the maternal toilet, naturally I have forgotten. The most memorable circumstance to me was, that I, who had never till that time possessed the least or most contemptible coin, received, in a network purse, six glittering guineas, with instructions to put three immediately into Mr. H——'s hands, and the others when he should call for them.

The rest of my mother's counsels, if deep, were not long; she, who had always something of a Roman firmness, shed more milk of roses, I believe, upon my cheeks than tears; and why not? What should there be to *her* corresponding to an ignorant child's sense of pathos, in a little journey of about a hundred miles? Outside her door, however, there awaited me some silly creatures, women, of course, old and young, from the nursery and the kitchen, who gave, and who

received, those fervent kisses which wait only upon love without awe and without disguise. Heavens! what rosaries might be strung for the memory of sweet female kisses, given without check or art, before one is of an age to value them! And again, how sweet is the touch of female hands as they array one for a journey! If anything needs fastening, whether by pinning, tying, or any other contrivance, how perfect is one's confidence in female skill; as if, by mere virtue of her sex and feminine instinct, a woman could not possibly fail to know the best and readiest way of adjusting every case that could arise in dress. Mine was hastily completed amongst them; each had a pin to draw from her bosom, in order to put something to rights about my throat or hands; and a chorus of "God bless hims!" was arising, when, from below, young Mephistopheles murmured an impatient groan, and perhaps the horses snorted. I found myself lifted into the chaise: counsels about the night and the cold flowing in upon me, to which Mephistopheles listened with derision or astonishment. I and he had each our separate corner; and, except to request that I would draw up one of the glasses, I do not think he condescended to address one word to me until dusk, when we found ourselves rattling into Chesterfield, having barely accomplished four stages, or forty or forty-two miles, in about nine hours. This, except on the Bath or great North roads, may be taken as a standard amount of performance, in 1794 (the year I am recording), and even ten years later.[1] In these present hurrying and tumultuous days, whether time is really of more value, I cannot say; but all people on the establishment of inns are required to suppose it of the most awful value. Now-a-days (1833), no sooner have the horses stopped at the gateway of a posting-house, than a summons is passed down to the stables; and in less than one minute, upon a great road, the horses next in rotation, always ready harnessed when expecting to come on duty, are heard trotting down the

[1] It appears, however, from the Life of Hume by my distinguished friend Mr. Hill Burton, that already, in the middle of the last century, the historian accomplished without difficulty six miles an hour with only a pair of horses. But this, it should be observed, was on the great North road.

yard. "Putting to," and transferring the luggage (supposing your conveyance a common post-chaise), once a work of at least thirty minutes, is now easily accomplished in three. And scarcely have you paid the ex-postilion before his successor is mounted; the ostler is standing ready with the steps in his hands to receive his invariable sixpence; the door is closed; the representative waiter bows his acknowledgment for the house, and you are off at a pace never less than ten miles an hour; the total detention at each stage not averaging above four minutes. Then (*i.e.*, at the latter end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century), half-an-hour was the minimum of time spent at each change of horses. Your arrival produced a great bustle of unloading and unharnessing; as a matter of course, you alighted and went into the inn; if you sallied out to report progress, after waiting twenty minutes, no signs appeared of any stir about the stables. The most choleric person could not much expedite preparations, which loitered not so much from any indolence in the attendants, as from faulty arrangements and total defect of forecasting. The pace was such as the roads of that day allowed; never so much as six miles an hour, except upon a very great road; and then only by extra payment to the driver. Yet, even under this comparatively miserable system, how superior was England, as a land for the traveller, to all the rest of the world, Sweden only excepted! Bad as were the roads, and defective as were all the arrangements, still you had these advantages: no town so insignificant, no posting-house so solitary, but that at all seasons, except a contested election, it could furnish horses without delay, and without license to distress the neighbouring farmers. On the worst road, and on a winter's day, with no more than a single pair of horses, you generally made out sixty miles; even if it were necessary to travel through the night, you could continue to make way, although more slowly; and finally, if you were of a temper to brook delay, and did not exact from all persons the haste or energy of Hotspurs, the whole system in those days was full of respectability and luxurious ease, and well fitted to renew the image of the home you had left, if not in its elegancies, yet in all its substantial comforts. What cosy old parlours in those

days! low-roofed, glowing with ample fires, and fenced from the blasts of doors by screens, whose foldings were or seemed to be infinite! What motherly landladies! won, how readily, to kindness the most lavish, by the mere attractions of simplicity and youthful innocence, and finding so much interest in the bare circumstance of being a traveller at a childish age! Then what blooming young handmaidens; how different from the knowing and worldly demireps of modern high-roads! And sometimes grey-headed, faithful waiters, how sincere and how attentive, by comparison with their flippant successors, the eternal "Coming, sir, coming," of our improved generation.

Such an honest, old butler-looking servant waited on us during dinner at Chesterfield, carving for me, and urging me to eat. Even Mephistopheles found his pride relax under the influence of wine; and, when loosened from this restraint, his kindness was not deficient. To me he showed it in pressing wine upon me, without stint or measure. The elegancies which he had observed in such parts of my mother's establishment as could be supposed to meet his eye on so hasty a visit had impressed him perhaps favourably towards myself: and could I have a little altered my age, or dismissed my excessive reserve, I doubt not that he would have admitted me, in default of a more suitable comrade, to his entire confidence for the rest of the road. Dinner finished, and myself at least, for the first time in my childish life, somewhat perhaps overcharged with wine, the bill was called for, the waiter paid in the lavish style of antique England, and we heard our chaise drawing up under the gateway—the invariable custom of those days—by which you were spared the trouble of going into the street; stepping from the hall of the inn right into your carriage. I had been kept back for a minute or so by the landlady and her attendant nymphs, to be dressed and kissed; and, on seating myself in the chaise, which was well lighted with lamps, I found my lordly young principal in conversation with the landlord, first, upon the price of oats—which youthful horsemen always affect to inquire after with interest—but, secondly, upon a topic more immediately at his heart—viz., the reputation of the road. At that time

of day, when gold had not yet disappeared from the circulation, no traveller carried any other sort of money about him; and there was consequently a rich encouragement to highwaymen, which vanished almost entirely with Mr. Pitt's act of 1797 for restricting cash payments. Property which could be identified and traced was a perilous sort of plunder; and from that time the free-trade of the road almost perished as a regular occupation. At this period it did certainly maintain a languishing existence; here and there it might have a casual run of success: and, as these local ebbs and flows were continually shifting, perhaps, after all, the trade might lie amongst a small number of hands. Universally, however, the landlords showed some shrewdness, or even sagacity, in qualifying, according to the circumstances of the inquirer, the sort of credit which they allowed to the exaggerated ill fame of the roads. Returning on this very road, some months after, with a timid female relative, who put her questions with undisguised and distressing alarm, the very same people, one and all, assured her that the danger was next to nothing. Not so at present: rightly presuming that a haughty cavalier of eighteen, flushed with wine and youthful blood, would listen with disgust to a picture too amiable and pacific of the roads before him, Mr. Spread-Eagle replied with the air of one who knew more than he altogether liked to tell, and, looking suspiciously amongst the strange faces lit up by the light of the carriage lamps—"Why, sir, there have been ugly stories afloat; I cannot deny it: and sometimes, you know, sir"—winking sagaciously, to which a knowing nod of assent was returned —"it may not be quite safe to tell all one knows. But you can understand me. The forest, you are well aware, sir, *is* the forest: it never was much to be trusted, by all accounts, in my father's time, and I suppose will not be better in mine. But you must keep a sharp look-out: and, Tom," speaking to the postilion, "mind, when you pass the third gate, to go pretty smartly by the thicket." Tom replied in a tone of importance to this professional appeal. General valedictions were exchanged, the landlord bowed, and we moved off for the forest. Mephistopheles had his travelling case of pistols. These he began now to examine; for some-

times, said he, I have known such a trick as drawing the charge whilst one happened to be taking a glass of wine. Wine had unlocked his heart—the prospect of the forest and the advancing night excited him—and even of such a child as myself he was now disposed to make a confidant. "Did you observe," said he, "that ill-looking fellow, as big as a camel, who stood on the landlord's left hand?"—Was it the man, I asked timidly, who seemed by his dress to be a farmer?—"Farmer, you call him! Ah! my young friend, that shows your little knowledge of the world. He is a scoundrel, the bloodiest of scoundrels. And so I trust to convince him before many hours are gone over our heads." Whilst saying this, he employed himself in priming his pistols; then, after a pause, he went on thus;—"No, my young friend, this alone shows his base purposes—his calling himself a farmer. Farmer he is not, but a desperate highwayman, of which I have full proof. I watched his malicious glances, whilst the landlord was talking; and I could swear to his traitorous intentions." So speaking, he threw anxious glances on each side as we continued to advance: we were both somewhat excited; he by the spirit of adventure, I by sympathy with him—and both by wine. The wine, however, soon applied a remedy to its own delusions; six miles from the town we had left, both of us were in a bad condition for resisting highwaymen with effect—being fast asleep. Suddenly a most abrupt halt awoke us—Mephistopheles felt for his pistols—the door flew open, and the lights of the assembled group announced to us that we had reached Mansfield. That night we went on to Newark, at which place about forty miles of our journey remained. This distance we performed, of course, on the following day, between breakfast and dinner. But it serves strikingly to illustrate the state of roads in England, whenever your affairs led you into districts a little retired from the capital routes of the public travelling, that, for one twenty-mile stage—viz., from Newark to Sleaford—they refused to take us forward with less than four horses. This was neither a fraud, as our eyes soon convinced us (for even four horses could scarcely extricate the chaise from the deep sloughs which occasionally seamed the road through tracts of

two or three miles in succession), nor was it an accident of the weather. In all seasons the same demand was enforced, as my female protectress found in conducting me back at a fine season of the year, and had always found in traversing the same route. The England of that date (1794) exhibited many similar cases. At present I know of but one stage in all England where a traveller, without regard to weight, is called upon to take four horses ; and that is at Ambleside, in going by the direct road to Carlisle. The first stage to Patterdale lies over the mountain of Kirkstone, and the ascent is not only toilsome (continuing for above three miles, with occasional intermissions), but at times is carried over summits too steep for a road by all the rules of engineering, and yet too little frequented to offer any means of repaying the cost of smoothing the difficulties.

It was not until after the year 1815 that the main improvement took place in the English travelling system, so far as regarded speed. It is, in reality, to Mr. Macadam that we owe it. All the roads in England, within a few years, were remodelled, and upon principles of Roman science. From mere beds of torrents and systems of ruts, they were raised universally to the condition and appearance of gravel walks in private parks or shrubberies. The average rate of velocity was, in consequence, exactly doubled—ten miles an hour being now generally accomplished, instead of five. And at the moment when all further improvement upon this system had become hopeless, a new prospect was suddenly opened to us by railroads ; which again, considering how much they have already exceeded the *maximum* of possibility as laid down by all engineers during the progress of the Manchester and Liverpool line, may soon give way to new modes of locomotion still more astonishing to our preconceptions.

One point of refinement, as regards the comfort of travellers, remains to be mentioned, in which the improvement began a good deal earlier, perhaps by ten years, than in the construction of the roads. Luxurious as was the system of English travelling at all periods, after the general establishment of post-chaises, it must be granted that, in the circumstance of cleanliness, there was far from being that attention,

or that provision for the traveller's comfort, which might have been anticipated from the general habits of the country. I, at all periods of my life a great traveller, was witness to the first steps and the whole struggle of this revolution. Maréchal Saxe professed always to look under his bed, applying his caution chiefly to the attempts of robbers. Now, if at the greatest inns of England you had, in the days I speak of, adopted this maréchal's policy of reconnoitring, what would you have seen? Beyond a doubt, you would have seen what, upon all principles of seniority, was entitled to your veneration—viz., a dense accumulation of dust far older than yourself. A foreign author made some experiments upon the deposition of dust, and the rate of its accumulation, in a room left wholly undisturbed. If I recollect, a century would produce a stratum about half-an-inch in depth. Upon this principle, I conjecture that much dust which I have seen in inns, during the first four or five years of the present century, must have belonged to the reign of George II. It was, however, upon travellers by coaches that the full oppression of the old vicious system operated. The elder Scaliger mentions, as a characteristic of the English in his day (about 1530), a horror of cold water; in which, however, there must have been some mistake.[1] Nowhere could he and his foreign companions obtain the luxury of cold water for washing their hands either before or after dinner. One day he and his party dined with the Lord Chancellor; and now, thought he, for very shame they will allow us some means of purification. Not at all: the Chancellor viewed this outlandish novelty with the same jealousy as others. However, on the earnest petition of Scaliger, he made an order that a basin or other vessel of cold water should be produced. His household bowed to this judgment, and a slop-basin was cautiously introduced. "What!"

[1] "*Some mistake*":—The mistake was possibly this: what little water for ablution, and what little rags called towels, a foreigner ever sees at home, will at least be always within reach, from the continental practice of using the bedroom for the sitting-room. But in England our plentiful means of ablution are kept in the background. Scaliger should have asked for a bedroom: the surprise was possibly —not at his wanting water, but at his wanting it in a dining-room.

said Scaliger, "only one, and we so many?" Even that one contained but a tea-cupful of water; but the great scholar soon found that he must be thankful for what he had got. It had cost the whole strength of the English Chancery to produce that single cup of water; and, for that day, no man in his senses could look for a second. Pretty much the same struggle, and for the same cheap reform, commenced about the year 1805-6. Post-chaise travellers could, of course, have what they liked, and generally they asked for a bedroom. It is of coach travellers I speak. And the particular innovation in question commenced, as was natural, with the mail-coach, which, from the much higher scale of its fares, commanded a much more select class of company. I was a party to the very earliest attempts at breaking ground in this alarming revolution. Well do I remember the astonishment of some waiters, the indignation of others, the sympathetic uproars which spread to the bar, to the kitchen, and even to the stables, at the first opening of our extravagant demands. Sometimes even the landlady thought the case worthy of her interference, and came forward to remonstrate with us upon our unheard-of conduct. But gradually we made way. Like Scaliger, at first we got but one basin amongst us, and that one was brought into the breakfast-room; but scarcely had two years revolved, before we began to see four, and all appurtenances, arranged duly in correspondence to the number of inside passengers by the mail: and, as outside travelling was continually gaining ground amongst the wealthier classes, more comprehensive arrangements were often made: though, even to this day, so much influence survives from the original aristocratic principle upon which public carriages were constructed, that on the mail-coaches there still prevails the most scandalous inattention to the comfort, and even to the security, of the outside passengers; a slippery glazed roof frequently makes the sitting a matter of effort and anxiety, whilst the little iron side-rail of four inches in height serves no one purpose but that of bruising the thigh. Concurrently with these reforms in the system of personal cleanliness, others were silently making way through all departments of the household economy. Dust from the reign of George II became

scarcer; gradually it came to bear an antiquarian value: basins lost their grim appearance, and looked as clean as in gentlemen's houses. And at length the whole system was so thoroughly ventilated and purified, that all good inns, nay, generally speaking, even second-rate inns, at this day, reflect the best features, as to cleanliness and neatness, of well-managed private establishments.

CHAPTER XIII

MY BROTHER PINK[1]

THE reader who may have accompanied me in these wandering memorials of my own life and casual experiences, will be aware that in many cases the neglect of chronological order is not merely permitted, but is in fact to some degree inevitable. There are cases, for instance, which, as a whole, connect themselves with my own life at so many different eras that, upon any chronological principle of position, it would have been difficult to assign them a proper place; backwards or forwards they must have leaped, in whatever place they had been introduced; and in their entire compass, from first to last, never could have been represented as properly belonging to any one *present* time, whensoever that had been selected: belonging to every place alike, they would belong, according to the proverb, to no place at all; or (reversing that proverb), belonging to no place by preferable right, they would, in fact, belong to every place; and therefore to this place.

[1] De Quincey's own title for the chapter is simply "My Brother"; but, as we have heard so much of one brother of his already, there may be the slight change of title, to indicate that the brother of the present chapter is his younger brother Richard, called by the family "Pink." See *ante*, pp. 29, 66, and footnotes. The matter of the chapter is a recast from that of a paper in *Tait's Magazine* for March 1838,—De Quincey having thought fit to bring in the story of that paper at this point, though it was deferred in the Magazine to more than three years beyond the autobiographical papers he has hitherto been using.—M.

The incidents I am now going to relate come under this rule; for they form part of a story which fell in with my own life at many different points. It is a story taken from the life of my own brother; and I dwell on it with the more willingness because it furnishes an indirect lesson upon a great principle of social life, now and for many years back struggling for its just supremacy — the principle that all corporal punishments whatsoever, and upon whomsoever inflicted, are hateful, and an indignity to our common nature, which (with or without our consent) is enshrined in the person of the sufferer. Degrading *him*, they degrade *us*. I will not here add one word upon the general thesis, but go on to the facts of this case; which, if all its incidents could be now recovered, was perhaps as romantic as any that ever yet has tried the spirit of fortitude and patience in a child. But its moral interest depends upon this—that simply out of one brutal chastisement arose naturally the entire series of events which so very nearly made shipwreck of all hope for one individual, and did in fact poison the tranquillity of a whole family for seven years.

My next brother, younger by about four years than myself (he, in fact, that caused so much affliction to the Sultan Amurath),[1] was a boy of exquisite and delicate beauty—delicate, that is, in respect to its feminine elegance and bloom; for else (as regards constitution) he turned out remarkably robust. In such excess did his beauty flourish during childhood that those who remember him and myself at the public school at Bath will also remember the ludicrous molestation in the streets (for to him it *was* molestation) which it entailed upon him—ladies stopping continually to kiss him. On first coming up to Bath from Greenhay, my mother occupied the very apartments on the North Parade just quitted by Edmund Burke, then in a decaying condition, though he did not die (I believe) till 1797. That state of Burke's health, connected with the expectation of finding him still there, brought for some weeks crowds of inquirers, many of whom saw the childish Adonis, then scarcely seven years old, and inflicted upon him what he viewed as the martyrdom of their caresses. Thus began a persecution which continued

[1] See *ante*, p. 67.—M.

as long as his years allowed it. The most brilliant complexion that could be imagined, the features of an Antinous, and perfect symmetry of figure at that period of his life (afterwards he lost it), made him the subject of never-ending admiration to the whole female population, gentle and simple, who passed him in the streets. In after days, he had the grace to regret his own perverse and scornful coyness. But, at that time, so foolishly insensible was he to the honour, that he used to kick and struggle with all his might to liberate himself from the gentle violence which was continually offered ; and he renewed the scene (so elaborately painted by Shakspere) of the conflicts between Venus and Adonis. For two years, this continued a subject of irritation the keenest on the one side, and of laughter on the other, between my brother and his plainer school-fellows. Not that we had the slightest jealousy on the subject—far from it : it struck us all (as it generally does strike boys) in the light of an attaint upon the dignity of a male, that he should be subjected to the caresses of women without leave asked : this was felt to be a badge of childhood, and a proof that the object of such caressing tenderness, so public and avowed, must be regarded in the light of a baby—not to mention that the very foundation of all this distinction, a beautiful face, is as a male distinction regarded in a very questionable light by multitudes, and often by those most who are the possessors of that distinction. Certainly that was the fact in my brother's case. Not one of us could feel so pointedly as himself the ridicule of his situation ; nor did he cease, when increasing years had liberated him from that female expression of delight in his beauty, to regard the beauty itself as a degradation ; nor could he bear to be flattered upon it ; though, in reality, it did him service in after distresses, when no other endowment whatsoever would have been availing. Often, in fact, do men's natures sternly contradict the promise of their features ; for no person would have believed that, under the blooming loveliness of a Narcissus, lay shrouded a most heroic nature, not merely an adventurous courage, but with a capacity of patient submission to hardship, and of wrestling with calamity, such as is rarely found amongst the endowments of youth. I have reason, also, to think that the state

of degradation in which he believed himself to have passed his childish years, from the sort of public petting which I have described, and his strong recoil from it as an insult, went much deeper than was supposed, and had much to do in his subsequent conduct, and in nerving him to the strong resolutions he adopted. He seemed to resent, as an original insult of nature, the having given him a false index of character in his feminine beauty, and to take a pleasure in contradicting it. Had it been in his power, he would have spoiled it. Certain it is, that, from the time he reached his eleventh birth-day, he had begun already to withdraw himself from the society of all other boys—to fall into long fits of abstraction—and to throw himself upon his own resources in a way neither usual nor necessary. School-fellows of his own age and standing—those, even, who were the most amiable—he shunned; and, many years after his disappearance, I found, in his handwriting, a collection of fragments, couched in a sort of wild lyrical verses, presenting, unquestionably, the most extraordinary evidences of a proud, self-sustained mind, consciously concentring his own hopes in himself, and abjuring the rest of the world, that can ever have emanated from so young a person; since, upon the largest allowance, and supposing them to have been written on the eve of his quitting England, they must have been written at the age of twelve. I have often speculated on the subject of these mysterious compositions; they were of a nature to have proceeded rather from some mystical quietist, such as Madame Guyon, if with this rapt devotion one can suppose the union of a rebellious and murmuring ambition. Passionate apostrophes there were to nature and the powers of nature; and what seemed strangest of all was—that, in style, not only were they free from all tumour and inflation which might have been looked for in so young a writer, but were even wilfully childish and colloquial in a pathetic degree; in fact, in point of tone, allowing for the difference between a narrative poem and a lyrical, they somewhat resembled that beautiful poem[1] of George Herbert, entitled Love Unknown,

[1] This poem, from great admiration of its mother English, and to illustrate some ideas upon style, Mr. Coleridge republished in his "Biographia Literaria."

in which he describes symbolically to a friend, under the form of treacherous ill-usage he had experienced, the religious processes by which his soul had been weaned from the world. The most obvious solution of the mystery would be, to suppose these fragments to have been copied from some obscure author: but, besides that no author could have remained obscure in this age of elaborate research who had been capable of sighs (for such I may call them) drawn up from such well-like depths of feeling, and expressed with such fervour and simplicity of language, there was another testimony to their being the productions of him who owned the penmanship; which was, that some of the papers exhibited the whole process of creation and growth, such as erasures, substitutions, doubts expressed as to this and that form of expression, together with references backwards and forwards. Now, that the handwriting was my brother's, admitted of no doubt whatsoever. I go on with his story.

In 1800 my visit to Ireland, and visits to other places subsequently, separated me from him for above a year. In 1801, we were at very different schools: I in the highest class of a great public school [1]—he at a very sequestered parsonage on a wild moor (Horwich Moor) in Lancashire. This situation, probably, fed and cherished his melancholy habits; for he had no society except that of a younger brother, who would give him no disturbance at all. The development of our national resources had not yet gone so far as absolutely to exterminate from the map of England everything like a heath, a breezy down (such as gave so peculiar a character to the counties of Wilts, Somerset, Dorset, &c.), or even a village common. Heaths were yet to be found in England, not so spacious, indeed, as the *landes* of France, but equally wild and romantic. In such a situation my brother lived, and under the tuition of a clergyman, retired in his habits, and even ascetic, but gentle in his manners. To that I can speak myself; for in the winter of 1801 I dined with him, and I found that his yoke was, indeed, a mild one; since, even to my

[1] Manchester Grammar School: which was De Quincey's next school after he left that of Winkfield, though he has not yet told us the fact.—M.

youngest brother H.,[1] a headstrong child of seven, he used no stronger remonstrance, in urging him to some essential point of duty, than "*Do be persuaded, sir.*" On another occasion I, accompanied by a friend, slept at Mr. J.'s: we were accidentally detained there through the greater part of the following day by snow; and, to the inexpressible surprise of my companion, a mercantile man from Manchester, for a considerable time after breakfast the reverend gentleman persisted in pursuing my brother from room to room, and at last from the ground-floor up to the attics, holding a book open (which turned out to be a Latin grammar); each of them (pursuer and pursued) moving at a tolerably slow pace: my brother H. silent; but Mr. J., with a voice of adjuration, solemn and even sad, yet kind and conciliatory, singing out at intervals, "Do be persuaded, sir!" "It is *your* welfare I seek!" "Let your own interest, sir, plead in this matter between us!" And so the chase continued, ascending and descending, up to the very garrets, down to the very cellars, then steadily revolving from front to rear of the house; but finally with no result at all. The spectacle reminded me of a groom attempting to catch a coy pony by holding out a sieve containing, or pretending to contain, a bribe of oats. Mrs. J., the reverend gentleman's wife, assured us that the same process went on at intervals throughout the week; and in any case it was clearly good as a mode of exercise. Now, such a master, though little adapted for the headstrong H., was the very person for the thoughtful and too sensitive R. Search the island through, there could not have been found another situation so suitable to my brother's wayward and haughty nature. The clergyman was learned, quiet, absorbed in his studies; humble and modest beyond the proprieties of his situation, and treating my brother in all points as a companion: whilst, on the other hand, my brother was not the person to forget the respect due, by a triple title, to a clergyman, a scholar, and his own preceptor—one, besides, who so little thought of exacting it. How happy might all parties have been—what suffering, what danger, what years of miserable anxiety, might have been spared to all who were interested—had the guardians and executors of my father's will thought fit to

[1] *i.e.* Henry: see *ante*, p. 29, footnote.—M.

"let *well* alone!" But, "*per star meglio*,"[1] they chose to remove my brother from this gentle recluse, to an active bustling man of the world, the very anti-pole in character. What might be the pretensions of this gentleman to scholarship, I never had any means of judging; and, considering that he must now (if living at all), at a distance of thirty-six years, be grey-headed, I shall respect his age so far as to suppress his name. He was of a class now annually declining (and I hope rapidly) to extinction. Thanks be to God, in this point at least, for the dignity of human nature, that, amongst the many, many cases of reform destined eventually to turn out chimerical, this one, at least, never can be defeated, injured, or eclipsed. As man grows more intellectual, the power of managing him by his intellect and his moral nature, in utter contempt of all appeals to his mere animal instincts of pain, must go on *pari passu*. And, if a "*Te Deum*," or an "*O, Jubilate!*" were to be celebrated by all nations and languages for any one advance and absolute conquest over wrong and error won by human nature in our times—yes, not excepting

"The bloody writing by all nations torn"—

the abolition of the commerce in slaves—to my thinking, that festival should be for the mighty progress made towards the suppression of brutal, bestial modes of punishment. Nay, I may call them worse than bestial; for a man of any goodness of nature does not willingly or needlessly resort to the spur or the lash with his horse or with his hound. But, with respect to man, if he will not be moved or won over by conciliatory means—by means that presuppose him a reasonable creature—then let him die, confounded in his own vileness: but let not me, let not the man (that is to say) who has him in his power, dishonour himself by inflicting punishments, violating that grandeur of human nature which, not in any vague rhetorical sense, but upon a religious principle of duty (viz., the scriptural doctrine that the human person is "the temple of the Holy Ghost"), ought to be a conse-

[1] From the well-known Italian epitaph—"*Stava bene: ma, per star meglio, sto qui*"—I was well; but, because I would be better than well, I am—where you see.

crated thing in the eyes of all good men ; and of this we may be assured—this is more sure than day or night—that, in proportion as man is honoured, exalted, trusted, in that proportion will he become more worthy of honour, of exaltation, of trust.

This schoolmaster had very different views of man and his nature. He not only thought that physical coercion was the one sole engine by which man could be managed, but, on the principle of that common maxim which declares that, when two schoolboys meet, with powers at all near to a balance, no peace can be expected between them until it is fairly settled *which* is the master—on that same principle, he fancied that no pupil could adequately or proportionably reverence his master, until he had settled the precise proportion of superiority in animal powers by which his master was in advance of himself. Strength of blows only could ascertain *that:* and, as he was not very nice about creating his opportunities, as he plunged at once "*in medias res*," and more especially when he saw or suspected any rebellious tendencies, he soon picked a quarrel with my unfortunate brother. Not, be it observed, that he much cared for a well-looking or respectable quarrel. No. I have been assured that, even when the most fawning obsequiousness had appealed to his clemency, in the person of some timorous new-comer, appalled by the reports he had heard—even in such cases (deeming it wise to impress, from the beginning, a salutary awe of his Jovian thunders), he made a practice of doing thus :—He would speak loud, utter some order, not very clearly, perhaps, as respected the sound, but with *perfect* perplexity as regarded the sense, to the timid, sensitive boy upon whom he intended to fix a charge of disobedience. "Sir, if you please, what was it that you said ?"—"What was it that I said ? What ! playing upon my words ? Chopping logic ? Strip, sir ; strip this instant." Thenceforward this timid boy became a serviceable instrument in his equipage. Not only was he a proof, even without co-operation on the master's part, that extreme cases of submission could not insure mercy, but also he, this boy, in his own person, breathed forth, at intervals, a dim sense of awe and worship—the religion of fear—towards the grim Moloch of the scene.

Hence, as by electrical conductors, was conveyed throughout every region of the establishment a tremulous sensibility that vibrated towards the centre. Different, O Rowland Hill, are the laws of thy establishment! far other are the echoes heard amid the ancient halls of Bruce.[1] There it is possible for the timid child to be happy—for the child destined to an early grave to reap his brief harvest in peace. Wherefore were there no such asylums in those days? Man flourished then, as now, in beauty and in power. Wherefore did he not put forth his power upon establishments that might cultivate happiness as well as knowledge? Wherefore did no man cry aloud, in the spirit of Wordsworth,

> "Ah, what avails heroic deed?
> What liberty? if no defence
> Be won for feeble Innocence?
> Father of all! though wilful manhood read
> His punishment in soul-distress,
> Grant to the *morn* of life its natural blessedness!"

Meantime, my brother R., in an evil hour, having been removed from that most quiet of human sanctuaries, having forfeited that peace which possibly he was never to retrieve, fell (as I have said) into the power of this Moloch. And this Moloch upon him illustrated the laws of his establishment: him also, the gentle, the beautiful, but also the proud, the haughty, he beat, kicked, trampled on!

In two hours from that time, my brother was on the road to Liverpool. Painfully he made out his way, having not much money, and with a sense of total abandonment which made him feel that all he might have would prove little enough for his purposes.

My brother went to an inn, after his long, long journey to Liverpool, foot-sore (for he had walked through four days, and, from ignorance of the world, combined with excessive

[1] This was not meant assuredly as any advertisement of an establishment which could not by all reports need any man's praise, but was written under a very natural impulse derived from a recent visit to the place, and under an unaffected sympathy with the spirit of freedom and enjoyment that seemed to reign amongst the young people. [The allusion is to the celebrated Bruce Castle Academy at Tottenham, presided over by Sir Rowland Hill's father, and where Sir Rowland Hill was himself a teacher till 1833.—M.]

shyness—oh ! how shy do people become from pride !—had not profited by those well-known incidents upon English high-roads—return post-chaises, stage-coaches, led horses, or waggons)—foot-sore, and eager for sleep. Sleep, supper, breakfast in the morning—all these he had ; so far his slender finances reached ; and for these he paid the treacherous landlord : who then proposed to him that they should take a walk out together, by way of looking at the public buildings and the docks. It seems the man had noticed my brother's beauty, some circumstances about his dress inconsistent with his mode of travelling, and also his style of conversation. Accordingly, he wiled him along from street to street, until they reached the Town Hall. "Here *seems* to be a fine building," said this Jesuitical guide, as if it had been some new Pompeii—some Luxor or Palmyra that he had unexpectedly lit upon amongst the undiscovered parts of Liverpool—"here seems to be a fine building ; shall we go in and ask leave to look at it ?" My brother, thinking less of the spectacle than the spectator, whom, in a wilderness of man, naturally he wished to make his friend, consented readily. In they went ; and, by the merest accident, Mr. Mayor and the town-council were then sitting. To them the insidious landlord communicated privately an account of his suspicions. He himself conducted my brother, under pretence of discovering the best station for picturesque purposes, to the particular box for prisoners at the bar. This was not suspected by the poor boy, not even when Mr. Mayor began to question him. He still thought it an accident, though doubtless he blushed excessively on being questioned, and questioned so impertinently, in public. The object of the mayor and of other Liverpool gentlemen then present was, to ascertain my brother's real rank and family : for he persisted in representing himself as a poor wandering boy. Various means were vainly tried to elicit this information ; until at length—like the wily Ulysses, who mixed with his pedlar's budget of female ornaments and attire a few arms, by way of tempting Achilles to a self-detection in the court of Lycomedes—one gentleman counselled the mayor to send for a Greek Testament. This was done ; the Testament was presented open at St. John's Gospel to my brother, and he

was requested to say whether he knew in what language that book was written ; or whether, perhaps, he could furnish them with a translation from the page before him. R., in his confusion, did not read the meaning of this appeal, and fell into the snare : construed a few verses ; and immediately was consigned to the care of a gentleman, who won from him by kindness what he had refused to importunities or menaces. His family he confessed at once, but not his school. An express was therefore forwarded from Liverpool to our nearest male relative—a military man, then by accident on leave of absence from India. He came over, took my brother back (looking upon the whole as a boyish frolic of no permanent importance), made some stipulations in his behalf for indemnity from punishment, and immediately returned home. Left to himself, the grim tyrant of the school easily evaded the stipulations, and repeated his brutalities more fiercely than before—now acting in the double spirit of tyranny and revenge.

In a few hours, my brother was again on the road to Liverpool. But not on this occasion did he resort to any inn, or visit any treacherous hunter of the picturesque. He offered himself to no temptations now, nor to any risks. Right onwards he went to the docks, addressed himself to a grave, elderly master of a trading vessel, bound upon a distant voyage, and instantly procured an engagement. The skipper was a good and sensible man, and (as it turned out) a sailor accomplished in all parts of his profession. The ship which he commanded was a South Sea whaler, belonging to Lord Grenville—whether lying at Liverpool or in the Thames at that moment, I am not sure. However, they soon afterwards sailed.

For somewhat less than three years, my brother continued under the care of this good man, who was interested by his appearance, and by some resemblance which he fancied in his features to a son whom he had lost. Fortunate, indeed, for the poor boy was this interval of fatherly superintendence ; for, under this captain, he was not only preserved from the perils which afterwards besieged him, until his years had made him more capable of confronting them ; but also he had thus an opportunity, which he improved to the utmost, of

making himself acquainted with the two separate branches of his profession—navigation and seamanship, qualifications which are not very often united.

After the death of this captain, my brother ran through many wild adventures ; until at length, after a severe action fought off the coast of Peru, the armed merchantman in which he then served was captured by pirates. Most of the crew were massacred. My brother, on account of the important services he could render, was spared ; and with these pirates, cruising under a black flag, and perpetrating unnumbered atrocities, he was obliged to sail for the next two years ; nor could he in all that period find any opportunity for effecting his escape.

During this long expatriation, let any thoughtful reader imagine the perils of every sort which besieged one so young, so inexperienced, so sensitive, and so haughty ; perils to his life (but these, it was the very expression of his unhappy situation, were the perils least to be mourned for) ; perils to his good name, going the length of absolute infamy—since, if the piratical ship had been captured by a British man-of-war, he might have found it impossible to clear himself of a voluntary participation in the bloody actions of his shipmates ; and, on the other hand (a case equally probable in the regions which they frequented), supposing him to have been captured by a Spanish *guarda costa*, he would scarcely have been able, from his ignorance of the Spanish language, to draw even a momentary attention to the special circumstances of his own situation ; he would have been involved in the general presumptions of the case, and would have been executed in a summary way, upon the *prima facie* evidence against him, that he did not appear to be in the condition of a prisoner ; and, if his name had ever again reached his country, it would have been in some sad list of ruffians, murderers, traitors to their country ; and even these titles, as if not enough in themselves, aggravated by the name of pirate, which at once includes them all, and surpasses them all. These were perils sufficiently distressing at any rate ; but last of all came others even more appalling—the perils of moral contamination, in that excess which might be looked for from such associates : not, be it recollected, a few wild

notions or lawless principles adopted into his creed of practical ethics, but that brutal transfiguration of the entire character which occurs, for instance, in the case of the young gipsy son of Effie Deans ; a change making it impossible to rely upon the very holiest instincts of the moral nature, and consigning its victim to hopeless reprobation. Murder itself might have lost its horrors to one who must have been but too familiar with the spectacle of massacre by wholesale upon unresisting crews, upon passengers enfeebled by sickness, or upon sequestered villagers, roused from their slumbers by the glare of conflagration, reflected from gleaming cutlasses, and from the faces of demons. This fear it was—a fear like this, as I have often thought—which must, amidst her other woes, have been the Aaron woe that swallowed up all the rest to the unhappy Marie Antoinette. This must have been the sting of death to her maternal heart, the grief paramount, the "crowning" grief—the prospect, namely, that her royal boy would not be dismissed from the horrors of royalty to peace and humble innocence ; but that his fair cheek would be ravaged by vice as well as sorrow ; that he would be tempted into brutal orgies, and every mode of moral pollution ; until, like poor Constance with her young Arthur, but for a sadder reason, even if it were possible that the royal mother should see her son in "the courts of heaven," she would not know again one so fearfully transfigured. This prospect for the royal Constance of revolutionary France was but too painfully fulfilled ; as we are taught to guess, even from the faithful records of the Duchesse d'Angouleme. The young Dauphin (*it has been said*, 1837), to the infamy of his keepers, was so trained as to become loathsome for coarse brutality, as well as for habits of uncleanliness, to all who approached him—one purpose of his guilty tutors being to render royalty and august descent contemptible in his person. And, in fact, they were so far likely to succeed in this purpose for the moment, and to the extent of an individual case, that, upon that account alone, but still more for the sake of the poor child, the most welcome news with respect to *him*—him whose birth[1] had

[1] To those who are open to the impression of omens, there is a most striking one on record with respect to the birth of this ill-fated prince, not less so than the falling off of the head from the cane of Charles I.

drawn anthems of exultation from twenty-five millions of men—was the news of his death. And what else can well be expected for children suddenly withdrawn from parental tenderness, and thrown upon their own guardianship, at such an age as nine or ten, and under the wilful misleading of perfidious guides? But, in my brother's case, all the adverse chances, overwhelming as they seemed, were turned aside by some good angel; all had failed to harm him; and from the fiery furnace he came out unsinged.

I have said that he would not have appeared to any capturing ship as standing in the situation of prisoner amongst the pirates, nor was he such in the sense of being confined. He moved about, when on board ship, in freedom; but he was

at his trial, or the same king's striking a medal, bearing an oak-tree (prefiguring the oak of *Boscobel*), with this prophetic inscription, "*Seris nepotibus umbram.*" At the very moment when (according to immemorial usage) the birth of a child was in the act of annunciation to the great officers of state assembled in the Queen's bedchamber, and when a private signal from a lady had made known the glad tidings that it was a Dauphin (the first child having been a princess, to the signal disappointment of the nation; and the second, who was a boy, having died), the whole frame of carved woodwork at the back of the Queen's bed, representing the crown and other regalia of France, with the Bourbon lilies, came rattling down in ruins. There is another and more direct ill omen connected, apparently, with the birth of this prince; in fact, a distinct prophecy of his ruin—a prophecy that he should survive his father, and yet not reign—which is so obscurely told, that one knows not in what light to view it; and especially since Louis XVIII, who is the original authority for it, obviously confounds the first Dauphin (who died before the calamities of his family commenced) with the second. As to this second, who is of course the prince concerned in the references of the text, a new and most extraordinary interest has begun to invest his tragical story in this very month of April 1853; at least it is now first brought before universal Christendom. In the monthly Journal of Putnam (published in New York) the number for April contains a most interesting memoir upon the subject, signed T. H. Hanson. Naturally, it indisposed most readers to put faith in any fresh pretensions of this nature that at least one false Dauphin had been pronounced such by so undeniable a judge as the Duchesse d'Angouleme. Meantime, it is made probable enough by Mr. Hanson that the true Dauphin did not die in the year 1795 at the Temple, but was personated by a boy unknown: that two separate parties had an equal interest in sustaining this fraud, and *did* sustain it; but one would hesitate to believe whether at the price of murdering a celebrated physician; that they had the prince conveyed secretly to an Indian settlement in Lower Canada, as a situation in which French,

watched, never trusted on shore, unless under very peculiar circumstances ; and tolerated at all only because one accomplishment made him indispensable to the prosperity of the ship. Amongst the various parts of nautical skill communicated to my brother by his first fatherly captain was the management of chronometers. Several had been captured, some of the highest value, in the many prizes, European or American. My brother happened to be perfect in the skill of managing them ; and, fortunately for him, no other person amongst them had that skill, even in its lowest degree. To this one qualification, therefore (and ultimately to this only), he was indebted for both safety and freedom ; since, though he might have been spared in the first moments of carnage

being the prevailing language, would attract no attention, as it must have done in most other parts of North America ; that the boy was educated and trained as a missionary clergyman ; and, finally, that he is now acting in that capacity under the name of Eleazer Williams—perfectly aware of the royal pretensions put forward on his behalf, but equally through age (being about 69), and through absorption in spiritual views, indifferent to these pretensions. It is admitted on all hands that the Prince de Joinville had an interview with Eleazer Williams a dozen years since : the prince alleges through mere accident ; but this seems improbable ; and Mr. Hanson is likely to be right in supposing this visit to have been a preconcerted one, growing out of some anxiety to test the reports current, so far as they were grounded upon resemblances in Mr. Williams's features to those of the Bourbon and Austrian families. The most pathetic fact is that of the idiocy common to the Dauphin and Mr. Eleazer Williams. It is clear from all the most authentic accounts of the young prince, that idiocy was in reality stealing over him—due doubtless to the *stunning* nature of the calamities that overwhelmed his family ; to the removal from him by tragical deaths, in so rapid a succession, of the Princesse de Lamballe, of his aunt, of his father, of his mother, and others whom most he had loved ; to his cruel separation from his sister; and to the astounding (for *him* naturally incomprehensible) change that had come over the demeanour and language of nearly all the people placed about the persons of himself and his family. An idiocy resulting from what must have seemed a causeless and demoniac conspiracy would be more likely to melt away under the sudden transfer to kindness and the gaiety of forest life than any idiocy belonging to original organic imbecility. Mr. Williams describes his own confusion of mind as continuing up to his fourteenth year, and all things which had happened in earlier years as gleaming through clouds of oblivion, and as painfully perplexing ; but otherwise he shows no desire to strengthen the pretensions made for himself by any reminiscences piercing these clouds that could point specially to France or to royal experiences.

from other considerations, there is little doubt that, in some one of the innumerable brawls which followed through the years of his captivity, he would have fallen a sacrifice to hasty impulses of anger or wantonness, had not his safety been made an object of interest and vigilance to those in command, and to all who assumed any care for the general welfare. Much, therefore, it was that he owed to this accomplishment. Still, there is no good thing without its alloy; and this great blessing brought along with it something worse than a dull duty—the necessity, in fact, of facing fears and trials to which the sailor's heart is pre-eminently sensible. All sailors, it is notorious, are superstitious; partly, I suppose, from looking out so much upon the wilderness of waves, empty of all human life; for mighty solitudes are generally fear-haunted and fear-peopled; such, for instance, as the solitudes of forests, where, in the absence of human forms and ordinary human sounds, are discerned forms more dusky and vague, not referred by the eye to any known type, and sounds imperfectly intelligible. And, therefore, are all German coal-burners, woodcutters, &c., superstitious. Now the sea is often peopled, amidst its ravings, with what seem innumerable human voices—such voices, or as ominous, as what were heard by Kubla Khan—"ancestral voices prophesying war"; oftentimes laughter mixes, from a distance (seeming to come also from distant times, as well as distant places), with the uproar of waters; and doubtless shapes of fear, or shapes of beauty not less awful, are at times seen upon the waves by the diseased eye of the sailor, in other cases besides the somewhat rare one of calenture. This vast solitude of the sea being taken, therefore, as one condition of the superstitious fear found so commonly among sailors, a second may be the perilous insecurity of their own lives, or (if the lives of sailors, after all, by means of large immunities from danger in other shapes, are *not* so insecure as is supposed, though, by the way, it is enough for this result that to themselves they seem so) yet at all events the insecurity of the ships in which they sail. In such a case, in the case of battle, and in others where the empire of chance seems absolute, there the temptation is greatest to dally with supernatural oracles, and supernatural

means of consulting them. Finally, the interruption habitually of all ordinary avenues to information about the fate of their dearest relatives; the consequent agitation which must often possess those who are re-entering upon home waters; and the sudden burst, upon stepping ashore, of heart-shaking news in long accumulated arrears—these are circumstances which dispose the mind to look out for relief towards signs and omens as one way of breaking the shock by dim anticipations. Rats leaving a vessel destined to sink, although the political application of it as a name of reproach is purely modern, must be ranked among the oldest of omens; and perhaps the most sober-minded of men might have leave to be moved with any augury of an ancient traditional order, such as had won faith for centuries, applied to a fate so interesting as that of the ship to which he was on the point of committing himself. Other causes might be assigned, causative of nautical superstition, and tending to feed it. But enough. It is well known that the whole family of sailors *is* superstitious. My brother, poor Pink (this was an old household name which he retained amongst us from an incident of his childhood), was so in an immoderate degree. Being a great reader (in fact, he had read everything in his mother tongue that was of general interest), he was pretty well aware how general was the ridicule attached in our times to the subject of ghosts. But this—nor the reverence he yielded otherwise to some of those writers who had joined in that ridicule—any more had unsettled his faith in their existence, than the submission of a sailor in a religious sense to his spiritual counsellor, upon the false and fraudulent pleasures of luxury, can ever disturb his remembrance of the virtues lodged in rum or tobacco. His own unconquerable, unanswerable experience, the blank realities of pleasure and pain, put to flight all arguments whatsoever that anchor only in his understanding. Pink used, in arguing the case with me, to admit that ghosts might be questionable realities in our hemisphere, but "it's a different thing to the *suthard* of the line." And then he would go on to tell me of his own fearful experience; in particular, of one many times renewed, and investigated to no purpose by parties of men communicating from a distance

upon a system of concerted signals, in one of the Gallapagos Islands. These islands, which were visited, and I think described, by Dampier—and therefore must have been an asylum to the Buccaneers and Flibustiers [1] in the latter part of the seventeenth century—were so still to their more desperate successors, the Pirates, at the beginning of the nineteenth; and for the same reason—the facilities they offer (rare in those seas) for procuring wood and water. Hither, then, the black flag often resorted; and here, amidst these romantic solitudes, islands untenanted by man—oftentimes it lay furled up for weeks together; rapine and murder had rest for a season; and the bloody cutlass slept within its scabbard. When this happened, and when it became known beforehand that it *would* happen, a tent was pitched on shore for my brother, and the chronometers were transported thither for the period of their stay.

The island selected for this purpose, amongst the many equally open to their choice, might, according to circumstances, be that which offered the best anchorage, or that from which the re-embarkation was easiest, or that which allowed the readiest access to wood and water. But, for some or all of these advantages, the particular island most generally honoured by the piratical custom and "good-will" was one known to American navigators as "The Wood-cutter's Island." There was some old tradition—and I know not but it was a tradition dating from the times of Dampier—that a Spaniard or an Indian settler in this island (relying, perhaps, too entirely upon the protection of perfect solitude) had been murdered in pure wantonness by some of the lawless rovers who frequented this solitary archipelago. Whether it were from some peculiar atrocity of bad faith in the act, or from the sanctity of the man, or the deep solitude of the island, or with a view to the peculiar edification of mariners in these semi-Christian seas—so, however, it was,

[1] "*Flibustiers*":—This word, which is just now revolving upon us in connection with the attempts on Cuba, &c., is constantly spelt by our own and the American journals as *Fillibustiers* and Fillibusteros. But the true word of nearly two centuries back amongst the old original race of sea-robbers (French and English) that made irregular war upon the Spanish shipping and maritime towns, was that which I have here retained.

and attested by generations of sea-vagabonds (for most of the armed roamers in these ocean Zaaras at one time were of a suspicious order), that every night, duly as the sun went down, and the twilight began to prevail, a sound arose—audible to other islands, and to every ship lying quietly at anchor in that neighbourhood—of a woodcutter's axe. Sturdy were the blows, and steady the succession in which they followed: some even fancied they could hear that sort of groaning respiration which is made by men who use an axe, or by those who in towns ply the "three-man beetle" of Falstaff, as paviors; echoes they certainly heard of every blow, from the profound woods and the sylvan precipices on the margin of the shores; which, however, should rather indicate that the sounds were *not* supernatural, since, if a visual object, falling under hyper-physical or cata-physical laws, loses its shadow, by parity of argument, an audible object, in the same circumstances, should lose its echo. But this was the story; and amongst sailors there is as little variety of versions in telling any true sea-story as there is in a log-book, or in "The Flying Dutchman": *literatim* fidelity is, with a sailor, a point at once of religious faith and worldly honour. The close of the story was—that after, suppose, ten or twelve minutes of hacking and hewing, a horrid crash was heard, announcing that the tree, if tree it were, that never yet was made visible to daylight search, had yielded to the old woodman's persecution. It was exactly the crash, so familiar to many ears on board the neighbouring vessels, which expresses the harsh tearing asunder of the fibres caused by the weight of the trunk in falling; beginning slowly, increasing rapidly, and terminating in one rush of rending. This over—one tree felled "towards his winter store"—there was an interval: man must have rest; and the old woodman, after working for more than a century, must want repose. Time enough to begin again after a quarter-of-an-hour's relaxation. Sure enough, in that space of time again began, in the words of Comus, "the wonted roar amid the woods." Again the blows become quicker, as the catastrophe drew nearer; again the final crash resounded; and again the mighty echoes travelled through the solitary forests, and were taken up by all the islands near and far, like Joanna's laugh amongst the Westmoreland hills,

to the astonishment of the silent ocean. Yet, wherefore should the ocean be astonished—he that had heard this nightly tumult, by all accounts, for more than a century? My brother, however, poor Pink, *was* astonished, in good earnest, being, in that respect, of the *genus attonitorum;* and as often as the gentlemen pirates steered their course for the Gallapagos, he would sink in spirit before the trials he might be summoned to face. No second person was ever put on shore with Pink, lest poor Pink and he might become jovial over the liquor, and the chronometers be broken or neglected; for a considerable quantity of spirits was necessarily landed, as well as of provisions, because sometimes a sudden change of weather, or the sudden appearance of a suspicious sail, might draw the ship off the island for a fortnight. My brother could have pleaded his fears without shame; but he had a character to maintain with the sailors: he was respected equally for his seamanship and his shipmanship.[1] By the way, when it is considered that one-half of a sailor's professional science refers him to the stars (though it is true the other half refers him to the sails and shrouds of a ship), just as, in geodesical operations, one part is referred to heaven, and one to earth—when this is considered, another argument arises for the superstition of sailors, so far as it is astrological. They who know (but know the οτι without knowing the διατι) that the stars have much to do in guiding their own movements, which are yet so far from the stars, and, to all appearance, so little connected with them, may be excused for supposing that the stars are connected astrologically with human destinies. But this by the way. The sailors, looking

[1] "*Seamanship and shipmanship*":—These are two functions of a sailor seldom separated in the mind of a landsman. The conducting a ship (causing her to *choose* a right path) through the ocean—that is one thing. Then there is the management of the ship within herself, the trimming of her sails, &c. (causing her to *keep* the line chosen)—that is another thing. The first is called seamanship; the second *might* be called shipmanship, but *is*, I believe, called navigation. They are perfectly distinct: one man rarely has both in perfection. Both may be illustrated from the rudder. The question is, suppose at the Cape of Good Hope, to steer for India: trust the rudder to him, as a seaman, who knows the passage whether within or without Madagascar. The question is to avoid a sunk rock: trust the rudder to him, as a navigator, who understands the art of steering to a nicety.

to Pink's double skill, and to his experience on shore (more astonishing than all beside, being experience gathered amongst ghosts), expressed an admiration which, to one who was also a sailor, had too genial a sound to be sacrificed, if it could be maintained at any price. Therefore it was that Pink still clung, in spite of his terrors, to his shore appointment. But hard was his trial; and many a time has he described to me one effect of it, when too long continued, or combined with darkness too intense. The woodcutter would begin his operations soon after the sun had set; but uniformly, at that time, his noise was less. Three hours after sunset it had increased; and generally at midnight it was greatest, but not always. Sometimes the case varied thus far: that it greatly increased towards three or four o'clock in the morning; and, as the sound grew louder, and thereby seemed to draw nearer, poor Pink's ghostly panic grew insupportable; and he absolutely crept from his pavilion, and its luxurious comforts, to a point of rock—a promontory—about half-a-mile off, from which he could see the ship. The mere sight of a human abode, though an abode of ruffians, comforted his panic. With the approach of daylight, the mysterious sounds ceased. Cock-crow there happened to be none, in those islands of the Gallapagos, or none in that particular island; though many cocks are heard crowing in the woods of America, and these, perhaps, might be caught by spiritual senses; or the woodcutter may be supposed, upon Hamlet's principle, either scenting the morning air, or catching the sounds of Christian matin-bells from some dim convent in the depth of American forests. However, so it was; the woodcutter's axe began to intermit about the earliest approach of dawn; and, as light strengthened, it ceased entirely. At nine, ten, or eleven o'clock in the forenoon, the whole appeared to have been a delusion; but towards sunset it revived in credit; during twilight it strengthened; and very soon afterwards superstitious panic was again seated on her throne. Such were the fluctuations of the case. Meantime, Pink, sitting on his promontory in early dawn, and consoling his terrors by looking away from the mighty woods to the tranquil ship, on board of which (in spite of her secret black flag) the whole crew, murderers and all, were sleeping peace-

fully—he, a beautiful English boy, chased away to the Antipodes from one early home by his sense of wounded honour, and from his immediate home by superstitious fear, recalled to my mind an image and a situation that had been beautifully sketched by Miss Bannerman in "Basil," one of the striking (though, to rapid readers, somewhat unintelligible) metrical tales published early in this century, entitled, "Tales of Superstition and Chivalry." Basil is a "rude sea-boy," desolate and neglected from infancy, but with feelings profound from nature, and fed by solitude. He dwells alone in a rocky cave; but, in consequence of some supernatural terrors connected with a murder, arising in some way (not very clearly made out) to trouble the repose of his home, he leaves it in horror, and rushes in the grey dawn to the sea-side rocks; seated on which, he draws a sort of consolation for his terrors, or of sympathy with his wounded heart, from that mimicry of life which goes on for ever amongst the raving waves.

From the Gallapagos, Pink went often to Juan (or, as he chose to call it, after Dampier and others, *John*) Fernandez. Very lately (December 1837), the newspapers of America informed us, and the story was current for full nine days, that this fair island had been swallowed up by an earthquake; or, at least, that in some way or other it had disappeared. Had that story proved true, one pleasant bower would have perished—raised by Pink as a memorial expression of his youthful feelings either towards De Foe, or his visionary creature Robinson Crusoe—but rather, perhaps, towards the substantial Alexander Selkirk; for it was raised on some spot known or reputed by tradition to have been one of those most occupied as a home by Selkirk. I say, "rather towards Alexander Selkirk"; for there is a difficulty to the judgment in associating Robinson Crusoe with this lovely island of the Pacific, and a difficulty even to the fancy. *Why* it is hard to guess, or through what perverse contradiction to the facts, De Foe chose to place the shipwreck of Robinson Crusoe upon the *eastern* side of the American continent. Now, not only was this in direct opposition to the realities of the case on which he built, as first reported (I believe) by Woodes Rogers, from the log-book of the Duke and Duchess (a privateer fitted out, to the

best of my remembrance, by the Bristol merchants, two or three years before the Peace of Utrecht); and so far the mind of any man acquainted with these circumstances was staggered, in attempting to associate this eastern wreck of Crusoe with this western island; but a worse obstacle than that, because a moral one, is this: by thus perversely transferring the scene from the Pacific to the Atlantic, De Foe has transferred it from a quiet and sequestered to a populous and troubled sea—the Fleet Street or Cheapside of the navigating world, the great thoroughfare of nations — and thus has prejudiced the moral sense and the fancy against his fiction still more inevitably than his judgment, and in a way that was perfectly needless; for the change brought along with it no shadow of compensation.

My brother's wild adventures amongst these desperate sea-rovers were afterwards communicated in long letters to a female relative; and, even as letters, apart from the fearful burden of their contents, I can bear witness that they had very extraordinary merit. This, in fact, was the happy result of writing from his heart; feeling profoundly what he communicated, and anticipating the profoundest sympathy with all that he uttered from her whom he addressed. A man of business, who opened some of these letters, in his character of agent for my brother's five guardians, and who had not any special interest in the affair, assured me that, throughout the whole course of his life, he had never read anything so affecting, from the facts they contained, and from the sentiments which they expressed; above all, the yearning for that England which he remembered as the land of his youthful pleasures, but also of his youthful degradations. Three of the guardians were present at the reading of these letters, and were all affected to tears, notwithstanding they had been irritated to the uttermost by the course which both myself and my brother had pursued—a course which seemed to argue some defect of judgment, or of reasonable kindness, in themselves. These letters, I hope, are still preserved, though they have been long removed from my control. Thinking of them, and their extraordinary merit, I have often been led to believe that every post-town (and many times in the course of a month) carries out numbers of beau-

tifully written letters, and more from women than from men; not that men are to be supposed less capable of writing good letters; and, in fact, amongst all the celebrated letter-writers of the past or present times, a large overbalance happens to have been men; but that more frequently women write from their hearts; and the very same cause operates to make female letters good, which operated at one period to make the diction of Roman ladies more pure than that of orators or professional cultivators of the Roman language — and which, at another period, in the Byzantine Court, operated to preserve the purity of the mother idiom within the nurseries and the female drawing-rooms of the palace, whilst it was corrupted in the forensic standards and the academic—in the standards of the pulpit and the throne.

With respect to Pink's yearning for England, that had been partially gratified in some part of his long exile: twice, as we learned long afterwards, he had landed in England; but such was his haughty adherence to his purpose, and such his consequent terror of being discovered and reclaimed by his guardians, that he never attempted to communicate with any of his brothers or sisters. There he was wrong; me they should have cut to pieces before I would have betrayed him. I, like him, had been an obstinate recusant to what I viewed as unjust pretensions of authority; and, having been the first to raise the standard of revolt, had been taxed by my guardians with having seduced Pink by my example. But that was untrue; Pink acted for himself. However, he could know little of all this; and he traversed England twice, without making an overture towards any communication with his friends. Two circumstances of these journeys he used to mention: both were from the port of London (for he never contemplated London but as a port) to Liverpool; or, thus far I may be wrong, that one of the two might be (in the return order) from Liverpool to London. On the first of these journeys, his route lay through Coventry; on the other, through Oxford and Birmingham. In neither case had he started with much money; and he was going to have retired from the coach at the place of supping on the first night (the journey then occupying two

entire days and two entire nights), when the passengers insisted on paying for him : that was a tribute to his beauty—not yet extinct. He mentioned this part of his adventures somewhat shyly, whilst going over them with a sailor's literal accuracy ; though, as a record belonging to what he viewed as childish years, he had ceased to care about it. On the other journey, his experience was different, but equally testified to the spirit of kindness that is everywhere abroad. He had no money, on this occasion, that could purchase even a momentary lift by a stage-coach : as a pedestrian he had travelled down to Oxford, occupying two days in the fifty-four or fifty-six miles which then measured the road from London, and sleeping in a farmer's barn, without leave asked. Wearied and depressed in spirits, he had reached Oxford, hopeless of any aid, and with a deadly shame at the thought of asking it. But, somewhere in the High Street — and, according to his very accurate sailor's description of that noble street, it must have been about the entrance of All Souls' College—he met a gentleman, a gownsman, who (at the very moment of turning into the college gate) looked at Pink earnestly, and then gave him a guinea, saying at the time, "I know what it is to be in your situation. You are a schoolboy, and you have run away from your school. Well, I was once in your situation, and I pity you." The kind gownsman, who wore a velvet cap with a silk gown, and must therefore have been what in Oxford is called a gentleman commoner, gave him an address at some college or other (Magdalen, he fancied, in after years), where he instructed him to call before he quitted Oxford. Had Pink done this, and had he frankly communicated his whole story, very probably he would have received, not assistance merely, but the best advice for guiding his future motions. His reason for not keeping the appointment was simply that he was nervously shy ; and, above all things, jealous of being entrapped by insidious kindness into revelations that might prove dangerously circumstantial. Oxford had a mayor ; Oxford had a corporation ; Oxford had Greek Testaments past all counting ; and so, remembering past experiences, Pink held it to be the wisest counsel that he should pursue his route on foot to Liverpool.

That guinea, however, he used to say, saved him from despair.

One circumstance affected me in this part of Pink's story. I was a student in Oxford at that time. By comparing dates, there was no doubt whatever that I, who held my guardians in abhorrence, and above all things admired my brother for his conduct, might have rescued him at this point of his youthful trials, four years before the fortunate catastrophe of his case, from the calamities which awaited him. This is felt generally to be the most distressing form of human blindness—the case when accident brings two fraternal hearts, yearning for re-union, into almost touching neighbourhood, and then in a moment after, by the difference, perhaps, of three inches in space, or three seconds in time, will separate them again, unconscious of their brief neighbourhood, perhaps for ever. In the present case, however, it may be doubted whether this unconscious rencounter and unconscious parting in Oxford ought to be viewed as a misfortune. Pink, it is true, endured years of suffering, four at least, that might have been saved by this seasonable rencounter; but, on the other hand, by travelling through his misfortunes with unabated spirit, and to their natural end, he won experience and distinctions that else he would have missed. His further history was briefly this:—

Somewhere in the river of Plate, he had effected his escape from the pirates; and a long time after, in 1807, I believe (I write without books to consult), he joined the storming party of the English at Monte Video. Here he happened fortunately to fall under the eye of Sir Home Popham; and Sir Home forthwith rated my brother as a midshipman on board his own ship, which was at that time, I think, a fifty-gun ship—the Diadem. Thus, by merits of the most appropriate kind, and without one particle of interest, my brother passed into the royal navy. His nautical accomplishments were now of the utmost importance to him; and, as often as he shifted his ship, which (to say the truth) was far too often —for his temper was fickle and delighting in change—so often these accomplishments were made the basis of very earnest eulogy. I have read a vast heap of certificates vouch-

ing for Pink's qualifications as a sailor, in the highest terms, and from several of the most distinguished officers in the service. Early in his career as a midshipman, he suffered a mortifying interruption of the active life which had long since become essential to his comfort. He had contrived to get appointed on board a fire-ship, the Prometheus (chiefly with a wish to enlarge his experience by this variety of naval warfare), at the time of the last Copenhagen expedition, and he obtained his wish; for the Prometheus had a very distinguished station assigned her on the great night of bombardment; and from her decks, I believe, was made almost the first effectual trial of the Congreve rockets. Soon after the Danish capital had fallen, and whilst the Prometheus was still cruising in the Baltic, Pink, in company with the purser of his ship, landed on the coast of Jutland, for the purpose of a morning's sporting. It seems strange that this should have been allowed upon a hostile shore; and, perhaps, it was *not* allowed, but might have been a thoughtless abuse of some other mission shorewards. So it was, unfortunately; and one at least of the two sailors had reason to rue the sporting of that day for eighteen long months of captivity. They were perfectly unacquainted with the localities, but conceived themselves able at any time to make good their retreat to the boat, by means of fleet heels, and arms sufficient to deal with any opposition of the sort they apprehended. Venturing, however, too far into the country, they became suddenly aware of certain sentinels, posted expressly for the benefit of chance English visitors. These men did not pursue, but they did worse, for they fired signal shots; and, by the time our two thoughtless Jack-tars had reached the shore, they saw a detachment of Danish cavalry trotting their horses pretty coolly down in a direction for the boat. Feeling confident of their power to keep ahead of the pursuit, the sailors amused themselves with various sallies of nautical wit; and Pink, in particular, was just telling them to present his dutiful respects to the Crown Prince, and assure him that, but for this lubberly interruption, he trusted to have improved his royal dinner by a brace of birds, when—oh, sight of blank confusion!—all at once they became aware that between themselves and their boat lay a

perfect network of streams, deep watery holes, requiring both time and local knowledge to unravel. The purser hit upon a course which enabled him to regain the boat; but I am not sure whether he also was not captured. Poor Pink *was* at all events; and, through seventeen or eighteen months, bewailed this boyish imprudence. At the end of that time there was an exchange of prisoners; and he was again serving on board various and splendid frigates. Wyborg in Jutland was the seat of his Danish captivity; and such was the amiableness of the Danish character, that, except for the loss of his time to one who was aspiring to distinction and professional honour, none of the prisoners who were on parole could have had much reason for complaint. The street mob, excusably irritated with England at that time (for, without entering on the question of right, or of expedience, as regarded that war, it is notorious that such arguments as we had for our unannounced hostilities could not be pleaded openly by the English Cabinet, for fear of compromising our private friend and informant, the King of Sweden)—the mob, therefore, were rough in their treatment of the British prisoners; at night, they would pelt them with stones; and here and there some honest burgher, who might have suffered grievously in his property, or in the person of his nearest friends, by the ruin inflicted upon the Danish commercial shipping, or by the dreadful havoc made in Zealand, would show something of the same bitter spirit. But the great body of the richer and more educated inhabitants showed the most hospitable attention to all who justified that sort of notice by their conduct. And their remembrance of these English friendships was not fugitive; for, through long years after my brother's death, I used to receive letters, written in the Danish (a language which I had attained in the course of my studies, and which I have since endeavoured to turn to account in a public journal for some useful purposes of research), from young men as well as women in Jutland; letters couched in the most friendly terms, and recalling to his remembrance scenes and incidents which sufficiently proved the terms of fraternal affection upon which he had lived amongst these public enemies; and some of them I have preserved to this day, as memorials

that do honour, on different considerations, to both parties alike.[1]

[1] For this little parenthetical record of my brother's early history, the exact chronology of the several items in the case may possibly be now irrecoverable ; but any error must be of trivial importance. His two pedestrian journeys between London and Liverpool occurred, I believe, in the same year—viz., after the death of the friendly captain, and during the last visit of his ship to England. The capture of Pink by the pirates took place after the ship's return to the Pacific.

CHAPTER XIV

PREMATURE MANHOOD[1]

My last two chapters, very slenderly connected with Birmingham, are yet made to rise out of it; the one out of Birmingham's own relation to the topic concerned (viz., *Travelling*), and the other (viz., *My Brother*) out of its relation to all possible times in my earlier life, and, therefore, why not to all possible places. *Anywhere* introduced, the chapter was partially out of its place; as well then to introduce it in Birmingham as elsewhere. Somewhat arbitrary episodes, therefore, are these two last chapters; yet still endurable as occurring in a work confessedly rambling, and whose very duty lies in the pleasant paths of vagrancy. Pretending only to amuse my reader, or pretending chiefly to *that*, however much I may have sought, or *shall* seek, to interest him occasionally through his profounder affections, I enjoy a privilege of neglecting harsher logic, and connecting the separate sections of these sketches, not by ropes and cables, but by threads of aerial gossamer.

This present chapter, it may seem, promises something of the same episodical or parenthetic character. But in reality it does not. I am now returning into the main current of my narrative, although I may need to linger for a moment upon a past anecdote. I have mentioned already that, on inquiring at the Birmingham Post-office for a letter

[1] De Quincey here reverts to his autobiographic paper in *Tait's Magazine* for August 1834; and the present chapter is a recast of a portion of that paper, with additions.—M.

addressed to myself, I found one directing me to join my sister Mary at Laxton, a seat of Lord Carbery's in Northamptonshire, and giving me to understand, that, during my residence at this place, some fixed resolution would be taken and announced to me in regard to the future disposal of my time, during the two or three years before I should be old enough on the English system for matriculating at Oxford or Cambridge.[1] In the poor countries of Europe, where they cannot afford double sets of scholastic establishments,—having, therefore, no splendid schools, such as are, in fact, peculiar to England,—they are compelled to throw the duties of such schools upon their universities ; and consequently you see boys of thirteen and fourteen, or even younger, crowding such institutions, which, in fact, they ruin for all higher functions. But England, whose regal establishments of both classes emancipate her from this dependency, sends her young men to college not until they have ceased to be boys—not earlier, therefore, than eighteen.

But when, by what test, by what indication, does manhood commence ? Physically by one criterion, legally by another, morally by a third, intellectually by a fourth—and all indefinite. Equator, absolute equator, there is none. Between the two spheres of youth and age, perfect and imperfect manhood, as in all analogous cases, there is no strict line of bisection. The change is a large process, accomplished within a large and corresponding space ; having, perhaps, some central or equatorial line, but lying, like that of our earth, between certain tropics, or limits widely separated. This *intertropical* region may, and generally does, cover a number of years ; and, therefore, it is hard to say, even for an assigned case, by any tolerable approximation, at what precise era it would be reasonable to describe the individual as having ceased to be a boy, and as having attained his inauguration as a man. Physically, we know that there is a very large latitude of differences, in the periods of human maturity, not merely between individual and individual, but also between nation and nation ; differences so great, that, in some southern regions of Asia, we hear of

[1] See *ante*, p. 268.—M.

matrons at the age of twelve. And though, as Mr. Sadler rightly insists, a romance of exaggeration has been built upon the facts, enough remains behind a real marvel to irritate the curiosity of the physiologist, as to its efficient, and, perhaps, of the philosopher, as to its final cause. Legally and politically, that is conventionally, the differences are even greater on a comparison of nations and eras. In England we have seen senators of mark and authority, nay, even a prime minister, the haughtiest,[1] the most despotic, and the most irresponsible of his times, at an age which, in many states, both ancient and modern, would have operated as a ground of absolute challenge to the candidate for offices the meanest. Intellectually speaking, again, a very large proportion of men *never* attain maturity. Nonage is their final destiny; and manhood, in this respect, is for them a pure idea. Finally, as regards the moral development—by which I mean the whole system and economy of their love and hatred, of their admirations and contempts, the total organisation of their pleasures and their pains—hardly any of our species ever attain manhood. It would be unphilosophic to say that intellects of the *highest* order were, or could be, developed fully, without a corresponding development of the whole nature. But of such intellects there do not appear above two or three in a thousand years. It is a fact, forced upon one by the whole experience of life, that almost all men are children, more or less, in their tastes and admirations. Were it not for man's latent tendencies—were it not for that imperishable grandeur which exists by way of germ and ultimate possibility in his nature, hidden though it is, and often all but effaced—how unlimited would be the contempt amongst all the wise for his species; and misanthropy would, but for the angelic ideal buried and imbruted in man's sordid race, become, amongst the noble, fixed, absolute, and deliberately cherished.

[1] "*The haughtiest*":—Which, however, is very doubtful. Such certainly, was the popular impression. But people who knew Mr. Pitt intimately have always ascribed to him a nature the most amiable and social, under an unfortunate reserve of manner; whilst, on the contrary, Mr. Fox, ultra-democratic in his principles and frank in his address, was repulsively aristocratic in his temper and sympathies.

But, to resume my question, how, under so variable a standard, both natural and conventional, of everything almost that can be received for a test or a presumption of manhood, shall we seize upon any characteristic feature, sufficiently universal to serve a *practical* use, as a criterion of the transition from the childish mind to the dignity (relative dignity, at least) of that mind which belongs to conscious maturity? One such criterion, and one only, as I believe, there is—all others are variable and uncertain. It lies in the reverential feeling, sometimes suddenly developed, towards woman, and the idea of woman. From that moment when women cease to be regarded with carelessness, and when the ideal of womanhood, in its total pomp of loveliness and purity, dawns like some vast aurora upon the mind, boyhood has ended; childish thoughts and inclinations have passed away for ever; and the gravity of manhood, with the self-respecting views of manhood, have commenced.

> "Mentemque priorem
> Expulit, atque hominem toto sibi cedere jussit
> Pectore."—*Lucan.*

These feelings, no doubt, depend for their development in part upon physical causes; but they are also determined by the many retarding or accelerating forces enveloped in circumstances of position, and sometimes in pure accident. For myself, I remember most distinctly the very day—the scene, and its accidents—when that mysterious awe fell upon me which belongs to woman in her ideal portrait: and from that hour a profounder gravity coloured all my thoughts, and a "beauty still more beauteous" was lit up for me in this agitating world. Lord Westport and myself had been on a visit to a noble family about fifty miles from Dublin; and we were returning from Tullamore by a public passage-boat on the splendid canal which connects that place with the metropolis. To avoid attracting an unpleasant attention to ourselves in public situations, I observed a rule of never addressing Lord Westport by his title: but it so happened that the canal carried us along the margin of an estate belonging to the Earl (now Marquis) of Westmeath; and on turning an angle we came suddenly in view of this

nobleman taking his morning lounge in the sun. Somewhat loftily he reconnoitred the miscellaneous party of clean and unclean beasts crowded on the deck of our ark, ourselves amongst the number, whom he challenged gaily as young acquaintances from Dublin; and my friend he saluted more than once as "My Lord." This accident made known to the assembled mob of our fellow-travellers Lord Westport's rank, and led to a scene rather too broadly exposing the spirit of this world. Herded together on the deck (or roof of that den denominated the "*state*-cabin") stood a party of young ladies, headed by their governess. In the cabin below was mamma, who as yet had not condescended to illuminate our circle, for she was an awful personage—a wit, a bluestocking (I call her by the name then current), and a leader of *ton* in Dublin and Belfast. The fact, however, that a young lord, and one of great expectations, was on board brought her up. A short cross-examination of Lord Westport's French valet had confirmed the flying report, and at the same time (I suppose) put her in possession of my defect in all those advantages of title, fortune, and expectation which so brilliantly distinguished my friend. Her admiration of him, and her contempt for myself, were equally undisguised. And in the ring which she soon cleared out for public exhibition, she made us both fully sensible of the very equitable stations which she assigned to us in her regard. She was neither very brilliant nor altogether a pretender, but might be described as a showy woman, of slight but popular accomplishments. Any woman, however, has the advantage of possessing the ear of any company: and a woman of forty, with such tact and experience as she will naturally have gathered in a talking practice of such duration, can find little difficulty in mortifying a boy, or sometimes, perhaps, in tempting him to unfortunate sallies of irritation. Me, it was clear, that she viewed in the light of a humble friend, or what is known in fashionable life by the humiliating name of a "toad-eater." Lord Westport, full of generosity in what regarded his own pretensions, and who never had violated the perfect equality which reigned in our deportment to each other, coloured with as much confusion as myself at her coarse insinuations. And, in reality, our

ages scarcely allowed of that relation which she supposed to exist between us. Possibly, she did *not* suppose it: but it is essential to the wit and the display of some people that it should have a foundation in malice. A victim and a sacrifice are indispensable conditions in every exhibition. In such a case, my natural sense of justice would generally have armed me a hundredfold for retaliation; but at present—chiefly, perhaps, because I had no effectual ally, and could count upon no sympathy in my audience—I was mortified beyond the power of retort, and became a passive butt to the lady's stinging contumely, and the arrowy sleet of her gay rhetoric. The narrow bounds of our deck made it not easy to get beyond talking-range; and thus it happened that for two hours I stood the worst of this bright lady's feud. At length the tables turned. Two ladies appeared slowly ascending from the cabin, both in deepest mourning, but else as different in aspect as summer and winter. The elder was the Countess of Errol, then mourning an affliction which had laid her life desolate, and admitted of no human consolation. Heavier grief—grief more self-occupied and deaf to all voice of sympathy—I have not happened to witness. She seemed scarcely aware of our presence, except it were by placing herself as far as was possible from the annoyance of our odious conversation. The circumstances of her loss are now forgotten; at that time they were known to a large circle in Bath and London, and I violate no confidence in reviewing them. Lord Errol had been privately intrusted by Mr. Pitt with an official secret—viz. the outline and principal details of a foreign expedition; in which, according to Mr. Pitt's original purpose, his lordship was to have held a high command. In a moment of intoxication, the earl confided this secret to some false friend, who published the communication and its author. Upon this, the unhappy nobleman, under too keen a sense of wounded honour, and perhaps with an exaggerated notion of the evils attached to his indiscretion, destroyed himself. Months had passed since that calamity, when we met his widow; but time appeared to have done nothing in mitigating her sorrow. The younger lady, on the other hand, who was Lady Errol's sister [1] ——

[1] George Hay, 14th Earl of Errol, had married, in 1796, Elizabeth-

Heavens! what a spirit of joy and festal pleasure radiated from her eyes, her step, her voice, her manner! She was Irish, and the very impersonation of innocent gaiety, such as we find oftener, perhaps, amongst Irish women than those of any other country. Mourning, I have said, she wore; from sisterly consideration, the deepest mourning: that sole expression there was about her of gloom or solemn feeling—

> "But all things else about her drawn
> From May-time and the cheerful dawn."

Odious bluestocking[1] of Belfast and Dublin! as some would

Jemima, daughter of Joseph Blake, Esq. of Ardfry, Co. Galway, and died in June 1798, the title then going to his brother William. It was the young widow of the deceased Earl, and her sister, Miss Blake, that De Quincey encountered on the canal-boat between Tullamore and Dublin.—M.

[1] I have sometimes had occasion to remark, as a noticeable phenomenon of our present times, that the order of ladies called *Bluestockings*, by way of reproach, has become totally extinct amongst us, except only here and there, with superannuated clingers to obsolete remembrances. The reason of this change is interesting; and I do not scruple to call it honourable to our intellectual progress. In the last (but still more in the penultimate) generation, any tincture of literature, of liberal curiosity about science, or of ennobling interest in books, carried with it an air of something unsexual, mannish, and (as it was treated by the sycophantish satirists that for ever humour the prevailing folly) of something ludicrous. This mode of treatment was possible so long as the literary class of ladies formed a feeble minority. But now, when two vast peoples, English and American, counting between them forty-nine millions, when the leaders of transcendent civilisation (to say nothing of Germany and France), behold their entire educated class, male and female alike, calling out, not for *Panem et Circenses* (Give us this day our daily bread and our games of the circus), but for *Panem et Literas* (Give us this day our daily bread and literature), the universality of the call has swept away the very name of *Bluestocking;* the very possibility of the ridicule has been undermined by stern realities; and the verbal expression of the reproach is fast becoming not simply obsolete, but even unintelligible to our juniors. By the way, the origin of this term *Bluestocking* has never been satisfactorily accounted for; unless the reader should incline to think *my* account satisfactory. I incline to that opinion myself. Dr. Bisset (in his Life of Burke) traces it idly to a *sobriquet* imposed by Mrs. Montagu, and the literary ladies of her circle, upon a certain obscure Dr. Stillingfleet, who was the sole masculine assistant at their literary sittings in Portman Square, and chose, upon some

call you, how I hated you up to that moment! half-an-hour after, how grateful I felt for the hostility which had procured me such an alliance. One minute sufficed to put the quick-witted young Irishwoman in possession of our little drama,

inexplicable craze, to wear blue stockings. The translation, however, of this name from the doctor's legs to the ladies' legs is still unsolved. That great *hiatus* needs filling up. I, therefore, whether erroneously or not, in reviewing a German historical work of some pretensions, where this problem emerges, rejected the Portman Square doctor altogether, and traced the term to an old Oxford statute—one of the many which meddle with dress, and which charges it as a point of conscience upon loyal scholastic students that they shall wear cerulean socks. Such socks, therefore, indicated scholasticism: worn by females, they would indicate a self-dedication to what for them would be regarded as pedantic studies. But, says an objector, no rational female *would* wear cerulean socks. Perhaps not, female taste being too good. But, as such socks would symbolise such a profession of pedantry, so, inversely, any profession of pedantry, by whatever signs expressed, would be symbolised reproachfully by the imputation of wearing cerulean socks. It classed a woman in effect as a scholastic pedant. Now, however, when the vast diffusion of literature as a sort of daily bread has made all ridicule of female literary culture not less ridiculous than would be the attempt to ridicule that same daily bread, the whole phenomenon, thing and word, substance and shadow, is melting away from amongst us. Something of the same kind has happened in the history of silver forks. Forks of any kind, as is well known, were first introduced into Italy: thence by a fantastic (but in this instance judicious) English traveller *immediately* (and not *mediately through France*) were introduced into England. This elegant revolution occurred about 240 years ago: and never since that day have there been wanting English protesters against the infamy of eating without forks; and for the last 160 years, at least, against the paganism of using *steel* forks, or, 2dly, two-pronged forks, or 3dly, of putting the knife into the mouth. At least 120 years ago, the Duchess of Queensberry (Gay's Duchess), that leonine woman, used to shriek out, on seeing a hyperborean squire conveying peas to his abominable mouth on the point of a knife, "Oh, stop him, stop him!—that man's going to commit suicide." This anecdote argues silver forks as existing much more than a century back, else the squire had a good defence. Since then, in fact, about the time of the French Revolution, silver forks have been recognised as not less indispensable appendages to any elegant dinner-table than silver spoons: and, along with silver forks, came in the explosion of that anti-Queensberry brutalism which forks first superseded—viz., the fiendish practice of introducing the knife within the lips. But, in defiance of all these facts, certain select hacks of the daily press, who never had an opportunity of seeing a civilised dinner, and fancying that their own obscene modes of feeding prevailed everywhere, got up the name

and the several parts we were playing. To look was to understand, to wish was to execute, with this ardent child of nature. Like Spenser's Bradamant, with martial scorn she couched her lance on the side of the party suffering wrong. Her rank, as sister-in-law to the Constable of Scotland,[1] gave her some advantage for winning a favourable audience; and, throwing her ægis over me, she extended that benefit to myself. Road was now made perforce for me also; my replies were no longer stifled in noise and laughter. Personalities were banished; literature was extensively discussed; and that is a subject which, offering little room to argument, offers the widest to eloquent display. I had immense reading; vast command of words, which somewhat diminished as ideas and doubts multiplied; and, speaking no longer to a deaf audience, but to a generous and indulgent protectress, I threw out, as from a cornucopia, my illustrative details and recollections; trivial enough, perhaps, as I might now think, but the more intelligible to my present circle. It might seem too much the case of a storm in a slop-basin, if I were to spend any words upon the revolution which ensued. Suffice it that I remained the lion of that company which had previously been most insultingly facetious at my expense; and the intellectual lady finally declared the air of the deck unpleasant.

Never, until this hour, had I thought of women as objects of a possible interest, or of a reverential love. I had known them either in their infirmities and their unamiable aspects, or else in those sterner relations which made them objects of ungenial and uncompanionable feelings. Now first it struck

of the *Silver-fork* School (which *should* have indicated the school of decency) as representing some ideal school of fantastic or ultra refinement. At length, however, when cheap counterfeits of silver have made the decent four-pronged fork cheaper than the two-pronged steel barbarism, what has followed? Why, this—that the universality of the diffusion has made it hopeless any longer to banter it. There is, therefore, this strict analogy between "the silver-fork" reproach and "the bluestocking" reproach—that in both cases alike a recognition, gradually becoming universal, of the thing itself as a social necessity, has put down for ever all attempts to throw ridicule upon it—upon literature, in the one case, as a most appropriate female ornament; and upon silver forks, on the other, as an element of social decorum.

[1] The hereditary office of the Earls of Errol.—M.

me that life might owe half its attractions and all its graces to female companionship. Gazing, perhaps, with too earnest an admiration at this generous and spirited young daughter of Ireland, and in that way making her those acknowledgments for her goodness which I could not properly clothe in words, I was roused to a sense of my indecorum by seeing her suddenly blush. I believe that Miss Bl—— interpreted my admiration rightly; for she was not offended; but, on the contrary, for the rest of the day, when not attending to her sister, conversed almost exclusively, and in a confidential way, with Lord Westport and myself. The whole, in fact, of this conversation must have convinced her that I, mere boy as I was (viz., about fifteen), could not have presumed to direct my admiration to *her*, a fine young woman of twenty, in any other character than that of a generous champion, and a very adroit mistress in the dazzling fence of colloquial skirmish. My admiration had, in reality, been addressed to her moral qualities, her enthusiasm, her spirit, and her generosity. Yet that blush, evanescent as it was—the mere possibility that I, so very a child, should have called up the most transitory sense of bashfulness or confusion upon any female cheek, first—and suddenly as with a flash of lightning penetrating some utter darkness—illuminated to my own startled consciousness, never again to be obscured, the pure and powerful ideal of womanhood and womanly excellence. This was, in a proper sense, a *revelation;* it fixed a great era of change in my life; and, this new-born idea being agreeable to the uniform tendencies of my own nature—that is, lofty and aspiring—it governed my life with great power, and with most salutary effects. Ever after, throughout the period of youth, I was jealous of my own demeanour, reserved and awestruck in the presence of women; reverencing, often, not so much *them*, as my own ideal of woman latent in them. For I carried about with me the idea, to which often I seemed to see an approximation, of

> "A perfect woman, nobly plann'd,
> To warn, to comfort, to command."

And from this day I was an altered creature, never again relapsing into the careless, irreflective mind of childhood.

At the same time I do not wish, in paying my homage to the other sex, and in glorifying its possible power over ours, to be confounded with those thoughtless and trivial rhetoricians who flatter woman with a false lip-worship, and, like Lord Byron's buccaneers, hold out to them a picture of their own empire built only upon sensual or upon shadowy excellences. We find continually a false enthusiasm, a mere bacchanalian inebriation, on behalf of woman, put forth by modern verse-writers, expressly at the expense of the other sex, as though women could be of porcelain, whilst man was of common earthenware. Even the testimonies of Ledyard and Park are partly false (though amiable) tributes to female excellence; at least they are merely one-sided truths—aspects of one phasis, and under a peculiar angle. For, though the sexes differ characteristically, yet they never fail to reflect each other; nor can they differ as to the general amount of development; never yet was woman in one stage of elevation and man (of the same community) in another. Thou, therefore, daughter of God and man, all-potent woman! reverence thy own ideal; and, in the wildest of the homage which is paid to thee, as also in the most real aspects of thy wide dominion, read no trophy of idle vanity, but a silent indication of the possible grandeur enshrined in thy nature; which realise to the extent of thy power,

> "And show us how divine a thing
> A woman may become."

For what purpose have I repeated this story? The reader may, perhaps, suppose it introductory to some tale of boyish romantic passion for some female idol clothed with imaginary perfections. But in that case he will be mistaken. Nothing of the kind was possible to me. I was pre-occupied by other passions. Under the disease—for disease it was—which at that time mastered me, one solitary desire, one frenzy, one demoniac fascination stronger than the fascinations of calenture, brooded over me as the moon over the tides—forcing me day and night into speculations upon great intellectual problems, many times beyond my strength, as indeed often beyond all human strength, but not the less provoking me to pursue them. As a prophet in days of old had no

power to resist the voice which, from hidden worlds, called him to a mission, sometimes, perhaps, revolting to his human sensibilities,—as he must deliver, was under a coercion to deliver, the burning word that spoke within his heart; or as a ship on the Indian Ocean cannot seek rest by anchoring, but *must* run before the wrath of the monsoon; such in its fury, such in its unrelentingness, was the persecution that overmastered me. School tasks under these circumstances, it may well be supposed, had become a torment to me. For a long time they had lost even that slight power of stimulation which belongs to the irritation of difficulty. Easy and simple they had now become as the elementary lessons of childhood. Not that it is possible for Greek studies, if pursued with unflinching sincerity, ever to fall so far into the rear as a *palæstra* for exercising both strength and skill; but, in a school where the exercises are pursued in common by large classes, the burden must be adapted to the powers of the weakest, and not of the strongest. And, apart from that objection, at this period, the hasty unfolding of far different intellectual interests than such as belong to mere literature had, for a time, dimmed in my eyes the lustre of classical studies, pursued at whatsoever depth, and on whatsoever scale. For more than a year, everything connected with schools and the business of schools had been growing more and more hateful to me. At first, however, my disgust had been merely the disgust of weariness and pride. But now, at this crisis (for crisis it was virtually to me), when a premature development of my whole mind was rushing in like a cataract, forcing channels for itself and for the new tastes which it introduced, my disgust was no longer simply intellectual, but had deepened into a *moral* sense as of some inner dignity continually violated. Once the petty round of school tasks had been felt as a molestation; but now, at last, as a degradation. Constant conversation with grown-up men for the last half-year, and upon topics oftentimes of the gravest order—the responsibility that had always in some slight degree settled upon myself since I had become the eldest surviving son of my family, but of late much more so when circumstances had thrown me as an English stranger upon the society of distinguished Irishmen—more, however,

than all beside, the inevitable rebound and counter-growth of internal dignity from the everlasting commerce with lofty speculations: these agencies in constant operation had embittered my school disgust, until it was travelling fast into a mania. Precisely at this culminating point of my self-conflict did that scene occur which I have described with Miss Bl——. In that hour another element, which assuredly was not wanted, fell into the seething caldron of new-born impulses that, like the magic caldron of Medea, was now transforming me into a new creature. Then first and suddenly I brought powerfully before myself the change which was worked in the aspects of society by the presence of woman—woman pure, thoughtful, noble, coming before me as a Pandora crowned with perfections. Right over against this ennobling spectacle, with equal suddenness, I placed the odious spectacle of schoolboy society—no matter in what region of the earth; schoolboy society, so frivolous in the matter of its disputes, often so brutal in the manner; so childish, and yet so remote from simplicity; so foolishly careless, and yet so revoltingly selfish; dedicated ostensibly to learning, and yet beyond any section of human beings so conspicuously ignorant. Was it indeed *that* heavenly, which I was soon to exchange for *this* earthly? It seemed to me, when contemplating the possibility that I could yet have nearly three years to pass in such society as this, that I heard some irresistible voice saying:—Lay aside thy fleshly robes of humanity, and enter for a season into some brutal incarnation.

But what connection had this painful prospect with Laxton! Why should it press upon my anxieties in approaching that mansion, more than it had done at Westport? Naturally enough, in part, because every day brought me nearer to the horror from which I recoiled: my return to England would recall the attention of my guardians to the question, which as yet had slumbered; and the knowledge that I had reached Northamptonshire would precipitate their decision. Obscurely, besides, through a hint which had reached me, I guessed what this decision was likely to be, and it took the very worst shape it could have taken. All this increased my agitation from hour to hour. But all this

was quickened and barbed by the certainty of so immediately meeting Lady Carbery. To her it was, and to her only, that I could look for any useful advice, or any effectual aid. She over my mother, as in turn my mother over *her*, exercised considerable influence; whilst my mother's power was very seldom disturbed by the other guardians. The mistress of Laxton it was, therefore, whose opinion upon the case would virtually be decisive; since, if *she* saw no reasonable encouragement to any contest with my guardians, I felt too surely that my own uncountenanced and unaided energies drooped too much for such an effort. Who Lady Carbery was, I will explain in my next chapter, entitled *Laxton*.[1] Meantime, to me individually, she was the one sole friend that ever I could regard as entirely fulfilling the offices of an honourable friendship. She had known me from infancy: when I was in my first year of life, she—an orphan and a great heiress—was in her tenth or eleventh; and, on her occasional visits to "the Farm" (a rustic old house, then occupied by my father), I, a household pet, suffering under an ague, which lasted from my first year to my third, naturally fell into her hands as a sort of superior toy, a toy that could breathe and talk. Every year our intimacy had been renewed, until her marriage interrupted it. But, after no very long interval, when my mother had transferred her household to Bath, in that city we frequently met again; Lord Carbery liking Bath for itself, as well as for its easy connection with London, whilst Lady Carbery's health was supposed to benefit by the waters. Her understanding was justly reputed a fine one; but, in general, it was calculated to win respect rather than love, for it was masculine and austere, with very little toleration for sentiment or romance. But to myself she had always been indulgently kind; I was protected in her regard, beyond anybody's power to dislodge me, by her childish remembrances; and of late years she had

[1] It may be well, however, to explain even at this point that George Evans, 4th Baron of Carbery, Co. Cork, born in 1766, had married in 1792 Susan, only daughter of Colonel Henry Watson, and that this lady was the Lady Carbery of whom De Quincey speaks. Though the peerage was Irish, Lord and Lady Carbery lived chiefly in England.—M.

begun to entertain the highest opinion of my intellectual promises. Whatever *could* be done to assist my views, I most certainly might count upon her doing; that is to say, within the limits of her conscientious judgment upon the propriety of my own plans. Having, besides, so much more knowledge of the world than myself, she might see cause to dissent widely from my own view of what was expedient as well as what was right; in which case I was well assured that, in the midst of kindness and unaffected sympathy, she would firmly adhere to the views of my guardians. In any circumstances she would have done so. But at present a new element had begun to mix with the ordinary influences which governed her estimates of things: she had, as I knew from my sister's report, become religious; and her new opinions were of a gloomy cast—Calvinistic, in fact, and tending to what is *now* technically known in England as "Low Church," or "Evangelical Christianity." These views, being adopted in a great measure from my mother, were naturally the same as my mother's; so that I could form some guess as to the general spirit, if not the exact direction, in which her counsels would flow. It is singular that, until this time, I had never regarded Lady Carbery under any relation whatever to female intellectual society. My early childish knowledge of her had shut out that mode of viewing her. But now, suddenly, under the new-born sympathies awakened by the scene with Miss Bl——, I became aware of the distinguished place she was qualified to fill in such society. In that Eden—for such it had now consciously become to me—I had no necessity to cultivate an interest or solicit an admission; already, through Lady Carbery's too flattering estimate of my own pretensions, and through old childish memories, I held the most distinguished place. This Eden she it was that lighted up suddenly to my new-born powers of appreciation, in all its dreadful points of contrast with the killing society of schoolboys. She it was, fitted to be the glory of such an Eden, who probably would assist in banishing me for the present to the wilderness outside. My distress of mind was inexpressible. And, in the midst of glittering saloons, at times also in the midst of society the most fascinating, I—contemplating the idea of that gloomy academic dungeon to which for three

long years I anticipated too certainly a sentence of exile—felt very much as in the middle ages must have felt some victim of evil destiny, inheritor of a false fleeting prosperity, that suddenly in a moment of time, by signs blazing out past all concealment on his forehead, was detected as a leper, and in that character, as a public nuisance and universal horror, was summoned instantly to withdraw from society,—prince or peasant, was indulged with no time for preparation or evasion,—and, from the midst of any society, the sweetest or the most dazzling, was driven violently to take up his abode amidst the sorrow-haunted chambers of a lazar-house.

CHAPTER XV

LAXTON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE [1]

SECTION I.—CYMON AND IPHIGENIA

MY route, after parting from Lord Westport at Birmingham, lay (as perhaps I mentioned before) through Stamford to Laxton, the Northamptonshire seat of Lord Carbery. From Stamford, which I had reached by some intolerable old coach, such as in those days too commonly abused the patience and long-suffering of Young England, I took a post-chaise to Laxton. The distance was but nine miles, and the postilion drove well; so that I could not really have been long upon the road; and yet, from gloomy rumination upon the unhappy destination which I believed myself approaching within three or four months, never had I weathered a journey that seemed to me so long and dreary. As I alighted on the steps at Laxton, the first dinner-bell rang; and I was hurrying to my toilet, when my sister Mary, who had met me in the portico, begged me first of all to come into Lady Carbery's dressing-room, her ladyship having something special to communicate, which related (as I understood her) to one Simon.

[1] The only original that I have found for this long and very interesting chapter of the Autobiography is in a mere scrap of that paper in *Tait's Magazine* for August 1834 which furnished the matter of the last chapter. The scrap consists of two meagre paragraphs inserted there registering a visit to Laxton as one of the incidents of the first month or two of De Quincey's life in England after his return from Ireland in the end of 1800. The expansion of that original in the present chapter is remarkable.—M.

"What Simon? Simon Peter?" O no, you irreverent boy; no Simon at all with an S, but Cymon with a C—Dryden's Cymon—

'That whistled as he went for want of thought.'"

This one indication was a key to the whole explanation that followed. The sole visitors, it seemed, at that time to Laxton, beside my sister and myself, were Lord and Lady Massey.[1] They were understood to be domesticated at Laxton for a very long stay. In reality, my own private construction of the case (though unauthorized by anything ever hinted to me by Lady Carbery) was that Lord Massey might probably be under some cloud of pecuniary embarrassments, such as suggested prudentially an absence from Ireland. Meantime, what was it that made him an object of peculiar interest to Lady Carbery? It was the singular revolution which in one whom all his friends looked upon as sold to constitutional torpor, suddenly and beyond all hope, had kindled a new and nobler life. Occupied originally by no shadow of any earthly interest, killed by *ennui*, all at once Lord Massey had fallen passionately in love with a fair young countrywoman, well connected, but bringing him no fortune (I report only from hearsay), and endowing him simply with the priceless blessing of her own womanly charms, her delightful society, and her sweet Irish style of innocent gaiety. No transformation, that ever legends or romances had reported, was more memorable. Lapse of time (for Lord Massey had now been married three or four years),[2] and deep seclusion from general society, had done nothing apparently to lower the tone of his happiness. The expression of this happiness was noiseless and unobtrusive; no marks were there of vulgar uxoriousness—nothing that could provoke the sneer of the worldling; but not the less so entirely had the society of his young wife created a new principle of life within him, and evoked some nature hitherto slumbering, and which, no doubt, would else have continued

[1] Hugh Massey, 3d Baron Massey in the Irish peerage, born 1761, had succeeded his father in the barony in 1790, and had married, 2d March 1792, Margaret, youngest daughter of William Barton, Esq. of Grove, Co. Tipperary.—M.

[2] Eight years. See last note.—M.

to slumber till his death, that at moments when he believed himself unobserved he still wore the aspect of an impassioned lover.

> "He beheld
> A vision, and adored the thing he saw.
> Arabian fiction never fill'd the world
> With half the wonders that were wrought for *him*.
> Earth breathed in one great presence of the spring—
> Her chamber window did surpass in glory
> The portals of the dawn."

And in no case was it more literally realized, as daily almost I witnessed, that

> "All Paradise
> Could, by the simple opening of a door,
> Let itself in upon him." [1]

For never did the drawing-room door open, and suddenly disclose the beautiful figure of Lady Massey, than a mighty cloud seemed to roll away from the young Irishman's brow. At this time it happened, and indeed it often happened, that Lord Carbery was absent in Ireland. It was probable, therefore, that during the long couple of hours through which the custom of those times bound a man to the dinner-table after the disappearance of the ladies, his time would hang heavily on his hands. To me, therefore, Lady Carbery looked, having first put me in possession of the case, for assistance to her hospitality, under the difficulties I have stated. She thoroughly loved Lady Massey, as, indeed, nobody could help doing; and for *her* sake, had there been no separate interest surrounding the young lord, it would have been most painful to her that, through Lord Carbery's absence, a periodic tedium should oppress her guest at that precise season of the day which traditionally dedicated itself to genial enjoyment. Glad, therefore, she was that an ally had come at last to Laxton, who might arm her purposes of hospitality with some powers of self-fulfilment. And yet, for a service of that nature, could she reasonably rely upon me? Odious is the hobble-de-hoy to the mature young man. Generally speaking, that cannot be denied. But in me, though naturally the

[1] Wordsworth's "Vaudracour and Julia."

shyest of human beings, intense commerce with men of every rank, from the highest to the lowest, had availed to dissipate all arrears of *mauvaise honte;* I could talk upon innumerable subjects ; and, as the readiest means of entering immediately upon business, I was fresh from Ireland—knew multitudes of those whom Lord Massey either knew or felt an interest in—and, at that happy period of life, found it easy, with three or four glasses of wine, to call back the golden spirits which were now so often deserting me. Renovated, meantime, by a hot bath, I was ready at the second summons of the dinner-bell, and descended, a new creature, to the drawing-room. Here I was presented to the noble lord and his wife. Lord Massey was in figure shortish, but broad and stout, and wore an amiable expression of face. That I could execute Lady Carbery's commission, I felt satisfied at once. And, accordingly, when the ladies had retired from the dining-room, I found an easy opening, in various circumstances connected with the Laxton stables, for introducing naturally a picturesque and contrasting sketch of the stud and the stables at Westport. The stables, and everything connected with the stables, at Laxton, were magnificent ; in fact, far out of symmetry with the house, which at that time was elegant and comfortable, but not splendid. As usual in English establishments, all the appointments were complete, and carried to the same point of exquisite finish. The stud of hunters was first-rate and extensive ; and the whole scene, at closing the stables for the night, was so splendidly arranged and illuminated that Lady Carbery would take all her visitors once or twice a week to admire it. On the other hand, at Westport you might fancy yourself overlooking the establishment of some Albanian pacha. Crowds of irregular helpers and grooms, many of them totally unrecognised by Lord Altamont, some half-countenanced by this or that upper servant, some doubtfully tolerated, some *not* tolerated but nevertheless slipping in by postern-doors when the enemy had withdrawn, made up a strange mob as regarded the human element in this establishment. And Dean Browne regularly asserted that five out of six amongst these helpers he himself could swear to as active boys from Vinegar Hill. Trivial enough, meantime, in our eyes, was

any little matter of rebellion that they might have upon their consciences. High treason we willingly winked at. But what we could *not* wink at was the systematic treason which they committed against our comfort—viz., by teaching our horses all imaginable tricks, and training them up in the way along which they should *not* go, so that when they were old they were very little likely to depart from it. Such a set of restive, hard-mouthed wretches as Lord Westport and I daily had to bestride, no tongue could describe. There was a cousin of Lord Westport's, subsequently created Lord Oranmore, distinguished for his horsemanship, and always splendidly mounted from his father's stables at Castle M'Garret, to whom our stormy contests with ruined tempers and vicious habits yielded a regular comedy of fun; and, in order to improve it, he would sometimes bribe Lord Westport's treacherous groom into misleading us, when floundering amongst bogs, into the interior labyrinths of these morasses. Deep, however, as the morass was this man's remorse when, on leaving Westport, I gave him the heavy golden perquisite which my mother (unaware of the tricks he had practised upon me) had by letter instructed me to give. He was a mere savage boy from the central bogs of Connaught, and, to the great amusement of Lord Westport, he persisted in calling me "your majesty" for the rest of that day; and by all other means open to him he expressed his penitence. But the Dean insisted that, no matter for his penitence in the matter of the bogs, he had certainly carried a pike at Vinegar Hill, and probably had stolen a pair of boots at Furnes, when he kindly made a call at the Deanery, in passing through that place to the field of battle. It is always a pleasure to see the engineer of mischief "hoist with his own petard"[1]; and it happened that the horses assigned to draw a post-chariot carrying Lord Westport, myself, and the Dean, on our return journey to Dublin, were a pair utterly ruined by a certain under-postilion named Moran. This particular ruin did Mr. Moran boast to have contributed as his separate contribution to the general ruinations of the stables. And the particular object was, that *his* horses,

[1] "Hamlet," but also "Ovid":—"Lex nec justior ulla est,
Quam necis artifices arte perire sua."

and consequently himself, might be left in genial laziness. But, as Nemesis would have it, Mr. Moran was the charioteer specially appointed to this particular service. We were to return by easy journeys of twenty-five miles a day, or even less; since every such interval brought us to the house of some hospitable family connected by friendship or by blood with Lord Altamont. Fervently had Lord Westport pleaded with his father for an allowance of four horses; not at all with any foolish view to fleeting aristocratic splendour, but simply to the luxury of rapid motion. But Lord Altamont was firm in resisting this petition at that time. The remote consequence was—that, by way of redressing the violated equilibrium to our feelings, we subscribed throughout Wales to extort six horses from the astonished innkeepers, most of whom declined the requisition, and would furnish only four, on the plea that the leaders would only embarrass the other horses; but one at Bangor, from whom we coolly requested eight, recoiled from our demand as from a sort of miniature treason. How so? Because in this island he had always understood eight horses to be consecrated to royal use. Not at all, we assured him; Pickford, the great carrier, always horsed his waggons with eight. And the law knew of no distinction between waggon and post-chaise, coach-horse or cart-horse. However, we could not compass this point of the eight horses, the double *quadriga*, in one single instance; but the true reason we surmised to be—not the pretended puritanism of loyalty to the House of Guelph, but the running short of the innkeeper's funds. If he had to meet a daily average call for twenty-four horses, then it might well happen that our draft upon him for eight horses at one pull would bankrupt him for a whole day. But I am anticipating. Returning to Ireland and Mr. Moran, the vicious driver of vicious horses, the immediate consequence to him of this unexpected limitation to a pair of horses was that all his knavery in one hour recoiled upon himself. The horses whom he had himself trained to vice and restiveness, in the hope that thus his own services and theirs might be less in request, now became the very curse of his life. Every morning, duly as an attempt was made to put them in motion, they began to back, and no arts, gentle or harsh, would for a moment

avail to coax or to coerce them into the counter direction. Could retrogression by any metaphysics have been translated into progress, we excelled in that; it was our *forte;* we could have backed to the North Pole. That might be the way to glory, or at least to distinction—*sic itur ad astra;* unfortunately, it was not the way to Dublin. Consequently, on *every* day of our journey—and the days were ten—not once, but always, we had the same deadly conflict to repeat; and this, being always unavailing, found its solution uniformly in the following ultimate resource. Two large-boned horses, usually taken from the plough, were harnessed on as leaders. By main force they hauled our wicked wheelers into the right direction, and forced them, by pure physical superiority, into working. We furnished a joyous and comic spectacle to every town and village through which we passed. The whole community, men and children, came out to assist at our departure; and all alike were diverted, but not the less irritated, by the demoniac obstinacy of the brutes, who seemed under the immediate inspiration of the fiend. Everybody was anxious to share in the scourging which was administered to them right and left; and, once propelled into a gallop (or such a gallop as our Brobdignagian leaders could accomplish), they were forced into keeping it up. But, without rehearsing all the details of the case, it may be readily conceived that the amount of trouble distributed amongst our whole party was enormous. Once or twice the friends at whose houses we slept were able to assist us. But generally they either had no horses, or none of the commanding power demanded. Often, again, it happened, as our route was very circuitous, that no inns lay in our neighbourhood; or, if there *were* inns, the horses proved to be of too slight a build. At Ballinasloe, and again at Athlone, half the town came out to help us; and, having no suitable horses, thirty or forty men, with shouts of laughter, pulled at ropes fastened to our pole and splinter-bar, and compelled the snorting demons into a flying gallop. But naturally a couple of miles saw this resource exhausted. Then came the necessity of "drawing the covers," as the dean called it—*i.e.*, hunting amongst the adjacent farmers for powerful cattle. This labour (O Jupiter, thanks be for *that!*) fell upon Mr. Moran. And sometimes it would

happen that the horses, which it had cost him three or four hours to find, could be spared only for four or five miles. Such a journey can rarely have been accomplished. Our zig-zag course had prolonged it into from 230 to 250 miles; and it is literally true that of this entire distance from Westport House to Sackville Street, Dublin, not one furlong had been performed under the spontaneous impulse of our own horses. Their diabolic resistance continued to the last. And one may venture to hope that the sense of final subjugation to man must have proved penally bitter to the horses. But meantime it vexes one that such wretches should be fed with good old hay and oats; as well littered down also in their stalls as a prebendary; and by many a stranger, ignorant of their true character, should have been patted and caressed. Let us hope that a fate to which more than once they were nearly forcing *us*—viz., regress over a precipice—may ultimately have been their own. Once I saw such another case dramatically carried through to its natural crisis in the Liverpool Mail. It was on the stage leading into Lichfield: there was no conspiracy, as in our Irish case; one horse only out of the four was the criminal; and, according to the Queen's Bench (Denman, C. J.), there is no conspiracy competent to one agent: but he was even more signally under a demoniac possession of mutinous resistance to man. The case was really a memorable one. If ever there was a distinct proclamation of rebellion against man, it was made by that brutal horse; and I therefore, being a passenger on the box, took a note of the case; and on a proper occasion I may be induced to publish it, unless some Houynhm should whinny against me a Chancery injunction.

From these wild, Tartar-like stables of Connaught, how vast was the transition to that perfection of elegance and of adaptation between means and ends that reigned from centre to circumference through the stables at Laxton! *I*, as it happened, could report to Lord Massey their earlier condition; he to me could report their immediate changes. I won him easily to an interest in my own Irish experiences, so fresh, and in parts so grotesque, wilder also by much in Connaught than in Lord Massey's county of Limerick; whilst he (without affecting any delight in the hunting systems of North-

amptonshire and Leicestershire) yet took pleasure in explaining to me those characteristic features of the English midland hunting, as centralized at Melton, which even then gave to it the supreme rank for brilliancy and unity of effect amongst all varieties of the chase.[1]

Horses had formed the natural and introductory topic of conversation between us. What we severally knew of Ireland, though in different quarters—what we both knew of Laxton,—the barbaric splendour and the civilized splendour, had naturally an interest for us both in their contrasts (at one time so picturesque, at another so grotesque), which illuminated our separate recollections. But my quick instinct soon made me aware that a jealousy was gathering in Lord Massey's mind around such a topic, as though too ostentatiously levelled to his particular knowledge, or to his *animal* condition of taste. But easily I slipped off into another key. At Laxton, it happened that the library was excellent. Founded by whom, I never heard: but certainly, when used by a systematic reader, it showed itself to have been systematically collected; it stretched pretty equably through two centuries—viz., from about 1600 to 1800—and might perhaps amount to 17,000 volumes. Lord Massey was far from

[1] If mere names were allowed to dazzle the judgment, how magnificent to a gallant young Englishman of twenty seems at first the *tiger-hunting* of India, which yet (when examined searchingly) turns out the meanest and most *cowardly* mode of hunting known to human experience. *Buffalo-hunting* is much more dignified as regards the courageous exposure of the hunter; but, from all accounts, its excitement is too momentary and evanescent: one rifle-shot, and the crisis is past. Besides that, the generous and honest character of the buffalo disturbs the cordiality of the sport. The very opposite reason disturbs the interest of *lion-hunting*, especially at the Cape. The lion is everywhere a cowardly wretch, unless when sublimed into courage by famine; but in Southern Africa he is the most currish of enemies. Those who fancied so much adventurousness in the lion conflicts of Mr. Gordon Cumming appear never to have read the missionary travels of Mr. Moffat. The poor missionary, without any arms whatever, came to think lightly of half-a-dozen lions seen drinking through the twilight at the very same pond or river as himself. Nobody can have any wish to undervalue the adventurous gallantry of Mr. G. Cumming. But, in the single case of the Cape lion, there is an unintentional advantage taken from the traditional name of *lion*, as though the Cape lion were such as that which ranges the torrid zone.

illiterate: and his interest in books was unaffected, if limited and too often interrupted by defective knowledge. The library was dispersed through six or seven small rooms, lying between the drawing-room in one wing and the dining-room in the opposite wing. This dispersion, however, already furnished the ground of a rude classification. In some one of these rooms was Lord Massey always to be found, from the forenoon to the evening. And was it any fault of *his*, that his daughter, little Grace, about two years old, pursued him down from her nursery every morning, and insisted upon seeing innumerable pictures, lurking (as she had discovered) in many different recesses of the library? More and more from this quarter it was that we drew the materials of our daily after-dinner conversation. One great discouragement arises commonly to the student, where the particular library in which he reads has been so disordinately collected that he cannot *pursue* a subject once started. Now, at Laxton, the books had been so judiciously brought together, so many hooks and eyes connected them, that the whole library formed what one might call a series of *strata*, naturally allied, through which you might quarry your way consecutively for many months. On rainy days, and often enough one had occasion to say through rainy weeks, what a delightful resource did this library prove to both of us! And one day it occurred to us that, whereas the stables and the library were both jewels of attraction, the latter had been by much the least costly. Pretty often I have found, when any opening has existed for making the computation, that, in a library containing a fair proportion of books illustrated with plates, about ten shillings a volume might be taken as expressing, upon a sufficiently large number of volumes, small and great, the fair average cost of the whole. On this basis, the library at Laxton would have cost less than £9000. On the other hand, 35 horses (hunters, racers, roadsters, carriage-horses, &c.) might have cost about £8000, or a little more. But the library entailed no permanent cost beyond the annual loss of interest: the books did not eat, and required no aid from veterinary[1] surgeons: whereas, for the horses, not only

[1] "*Veterinary*":—By the way, whence comes this odd-looking word? The word *veterana* I have met with in monkish writers, to

such ministrations were intermittingly required, but a costly permanent establishment of grooms and helpers. Lord Carbery, who had received an elaborate Etonian education, was even more earnestly a student than his friend Lord Massey, who had probably been educated at home under a private tutor. He read everything connected with general politics (meaning by *general* not personal politics) and with social philosophy. At Laxton, indeed, it was that I first saw Godwin's "Political Justice"; not the second and emasculated edition in *octavo*, but the original *quarto* edition, with all its virus as yet undiluted of raw anti-social Jacobinism.

At Laxton it was that I first saw the entire aggregate labours, brigaded, as it were, and paraded as if for martial review, of that most industrious benefactor to the early stages of our English historical literature, Thomas Hearne. Three hundred guineas, I believe, had been the price paid cheerfully at one time for a complete set of Hearne. At Laxton, also, it was that first I saw the total array of works edited by Dr. Birch. It was a complete *armilustrium*, a *recognitio*, or mustering, as it were, not of pompous Prætorian cohorts, or unique guardsmen, but of the yeomanry, the militia, or what, under the old form of expression, you might regard as the *trained bands* of our literature—the fund from which ultimately, or in the last resort, students look for the materials of our vast and myriad-faced literature. A French author of eminence, fifty years back, having occasion to speak of our English literature collectively, in reference to the one point of its *variety*, being also a man of honour, and disdaining that sort of patriotism which sacrifices the truth to nationality, speaks of our pretensions in these words:—*Les Anglois qui ont une littérature infiniment plus variée que la nôtre.* This fact is a feature in our national pretensions that could ever have been regarded doubtfully merely through insufficient knowledge. Dr. Johnson, indeed, made it the distinguishing merit of the French, that they "have a book upon every subject." But Dr. Johnson was not only capricious as regards

express *domesticated quadrupeds;* and evidently from that word must have originated the word *veterinary*. But the question is still but one step removed: for how came *veterana* by that acceptation in rural economy?

temper and variable humours, but as regards the inequality of his knowledge. Incoherent and unsystematic was Dr. Johnson's information in most cases. Hence his extravagant misappraisement of Knolles, the Turkish historian, which is exposed so severely by Spittler, the German, who, again, is himself miserably superficial in his analysis of English History. Hence the feeble credulity which Dr. Johnson showed with respect to the forgery of De Foe (under the masque of Captain Carleton) upon the Catalonian campaign of Lord Peterborough. But it is singular that a literature so unrivalled as ours in its compass and variety should not have produced any, even the shallowest, manual of itself. And thus it happens, for example, that writers so laborious and serviceable as Birch are in any popular sense scarcely known. I showed to Lord Massey, among others of his works, that which relates to Lord Worcester's (*i.e.*, Lord Glamorgan's) negotiations with the Papal nuncio in Ireland about the year 1644, &c. Connected with these negotiations were many names amongst Lord Massey's own ancestors; so that here he suddenly alighted upon a fund of archæologic memorabilia, connecting what interested him as an Irishman in general with what most interested him as the head of a particular family. It is remarkable, also, as an indication of the *general* nobility and elevation which had accompanied the revolution in his life, that, concurrently with the constitutional torpor previously besetting him, had melted away the intellectual torpor under which he had found books until recently of little practical value. Lady Carbery had herself told me that the two revolutions went on simultaneously. He began to take an interest in literature when life itself unfolded a new interest, under the companionship of his youthful wife. And here, by the way, as subsequently in scores of other instances, I saw broad evidences of the credulity with which we have adopted into our grave political faith the rash and malicious sketches of our novelists. With Fielding commenced the practice of systematically traducing our order of country gentlemen. His picture of Squire Western is not only a malicious, but also an incongruous, libel. The squire's ordinary language is impossible, being alternately bookish and absurdly rustic. In reality, the

conventional dialect ascribed to the rustic order in general —to peasants even more than to gentlemen—in our English plays and novels, is a childish and fantastic babble, belonging to no form of real breathing life ; nowhere intelligible ; not in *any* province ; whilst, at the same time, all provinces— Somersetshire, Devonshire, Hampshire—are confounded with our Midland Counties ; and positively the diction of Parricombe and Charricombe from Exmoor Forest is mixed up with the pure Icelandic forms of the English Lakes, of North Yorkshire, and of Northumberland. In Scotland, it needs but a slight intercourse with the peasantry to distinguish various dialects : the Aberdonian and Fifeshire, for instance, how easily distinguished, even by an English alien, from the western dialects of Ayrshire, &c. And I have heard it said by Scottish purists in this matter that even Sir Walter Scott is chargeable with considerable licentiousness in the management of his colloquial Scotch. Yet, generally speaking, it bears the strongest impress of truthfulness. But, on the other hand, how false and powerless does this same Sir Walter become, when the necessities of his tale oblige him at any time to come among the English peasantry! His magic wand is instantaneously broken ; and he moves along by a babble of impossible forms, as fantastic as any that our London theatres have traditionally ascribed to English rustics, to English sailors, and to Irishmen universally. Fielding is open to the same stern criticism, as a deliberate falsehood-monger, and from the same cause—want of energy to face the difficulty of mastering a real living idiom. This defect in language, however, I cite only as one feature in the complex falsehood which disfigures Fielding's portrait of the English country gentleman. Meantime the question arises, Did he mean his Squire Western for a *representative* portrait? Possibly not. He might design it expressly as a sketch of an individual, and by no means of a class. And the fault may be, after all, not in *him*, the writer, but in *us*, the falsely interpreting readers. But be that as it may, and figure to ourselves as we may the rustic squire of a hundred to a hundred and fifty years back (though manifestly at utter war, in the portraitures of our novelists, with the realities handed down to us by our Parliamentary annals), on that *arena* we

are dealing with objects of pure speculative curiosity. Far different is the same question when practically treated for purposes of present legislation or philosophic inference. One hundred years ago, such was the difficulty of social intercourse, simply from the difficulty of locomotion (though even then this difficulty was much lowered to the English, as beyond comparison the most equestrian of nations), that it is possible to imagine a shade of difference as still distinguishing the town-bred man from the rustic ; though, considering the multiplied distribution of our assize towns, our cathedral towns, our sea-ports, and our universities, all so many recurring centres of civility, it is not very easy to imagine such a thing in an island no larger than ours. But can any human indulgence be extended to the credulity which assumes the same possibility as existing for *us* in the very middle of the nineteenth century ? At a time when every week sees the town banker drawn from our rural gentry, railway directors in every quarter transferring themselves indifferently from town to country, from country to town, lawyers, clergymen, medical men, magistrates, local judges, &c., all shifting in and out between town and country ; rural families all intermarrying on terms of the widest freedom with town families ; all again, in the persons of their children, meeting for study at the same schools, colleges, military academies, &c. : by what furious forgetfulness of the realities belonging to the case has it been possible for writers in public journals to persist in arguing national questions upon the assumption of a bisection in our population—a double current, on the one side steeped to the lips in town prejudices, on the other side traditionally sold to rustic views and doctrines ? Such double currents, like the Rhone flowing through the Lake of Geneva, and yet refusing to intermingle, probably *did* exist, and had an important significance in the Low Countries of the fifteenth century, or between the privileged cities and the unprivileged country of Germany down to the Thirty Years' War ; but, for us, they are in the last degree fabulous distinctions—pure fairy tales ; and the social economist or the historian who builds on such phantoms as that of a rustic aristocracy still retaining any substantial grounds of distinction from the town aristocracies, proclaims the hollowness of

any and all his doctrines that depend upon such assumptions. Lord Carbery was a thorough fox-hunter. The fox-hunting of the adjacent county of Leicestershire was not then what it is now. The state of the land was radically different for the foot of the horse ; the nature and distribution of the fences was different ; so that a class of horses thoroughly different was then required. But then, as now, it offered the finest exhibition of the fox-chase that is known in Europe ; and then, as now, this is the best adapted among all known varieties of hunting to the exhibition of adventurous and skilful riding, and generally, perhaps, to the development of manly and athletic qualities. Lord Carbery, during the season, might be immoderately addicted to this mode of sporting, having naturally a pleasurable feeling connected with his own reputation as a skilful and fearless horseman. But, though the chases were in those days longer than they are at present, small was the amount of time really abstracted from that which he had disposable for general purposes ; amongst which purposes ranked foremost his literary pursuits. And, however much he transcended the prevailing conception of his order, as sketched by satiric and often ignorant novelists, he might be regarded, in all that concerned the liberalization of his views, as pretty fairly representing that order. Thus, through every *real* experience, the crazy notion of a rural aristocracy flowing apart from the urban aristocracy, and standing on a different level of culture as to intellect, of polish as to manners, and of interests as to social objects—a notion at all times false as a fact—now at length became with all thoughtful men monstrous as a possibility.

Meantime Lord Massey was reached by reports both through Lady Carbery and myself of something which interested him more profoundly than all earthly records of horsemanship, or any conceivable questions connected with books. Lady Carbery, with a view to the amusement of Lady Massey and my sister, for both of whom youth and previous seclusion had created a natural interest in all such scenes, accepted two or three times in every week dinner invitations to all the families on her visiting list, and lying within her winter circle, which was measured by a radius of about seventeen miles. For, dreadful as were the roads in

those days, when the Bath, the Bristol, or the Dover mail was equally perplexed oftentimes to accomplish Mr. Palmer's rate of seven miles an hour,[1] a distance of seventeen was yet easily accomplished in 100 minutes by the powerful Laxton horses. Magnificent was the Laxton turn-out; and in the roomy travelling-coach of Lady Carbery, made large enough to receive upon occasion even a bed, it would have been an idle scruple to fear the crowding a party which mustered only three besides myself: for Lord Massey uniformly declined joining us,—in which I believe that he was right. A schoolboy like myself had fortunately no dignity to lose. But Lord Massey, a needy Irish peer (or, strictly speaking, since the Union no peer at all, though still a hereditary lord), was bound to be trebly vigilant over his surviving honours. This he owed to his country as well as to his family. He recoiled from what he figured to himself (but too often falsely figured) as the haughty and disdainful English nobility—all so rich, all so polished in manner, all so punctiliously correct in the ritual of *bienséance*. Lord Carbery might face them gaily and boldly; for *he* was rich, and, although possessing Irish estates and an Irish mansion, was a thorough Englishman by education and early association. "But I," said Lord Massey, "had a careless Irish education, and am never quite sure that I may not be trespassing on some mysterious law of English good-breeding." In vain I suggested to him, that most of what passed amongst foreigners and amongst Irishmen for English *hauteur* was pure reserve, which, among all people that were bound over by the inevitable restraints of their rank (imposing, it must be remembered, jealous duties as well as privileges), was sure to become the operative feeling. I contended, that in the English situation there was no escaping this English reserve, except by great impudence and defective sensibility; and that, if examined, reserve was the truest expression of respect towards those who were its objects. In vain did Lady Carbery back me in this representation. He stood firm, and never once accompanied us to any dinner party. Northamptonshire, I know not why, is (or then was) more thickly

[1] The allusion is to John Palmer of Bath, whose reform of the old stage-coach and postal system dates from 1784.—M.

sown with aristocratic families than any in the kingdom. Many elegant and pretty women there naturally were in these parties; but undoubtedly our two Laxton baronesses shone advantageously amongst them. A boy like myself could lay no restraint upon the after-dinner feelings of the gentlemen; and almost uniformly I heard such verdicts passed upon the personal attractions of both, but especially Lady Massey, as tended greatly to soothe the feelings of Lord Massey. It is singular that Lady Massey universally carried off the palm of unlimited homage. Lady Carbery was a regular beauty, and publicly known for such; both were fine figures, and apparently not older than 26; but in her Irish friend people felt something more thoroughly artless and feminine—for the masculine understanding of Lady Carbery in some way communicated its commanding expression to her deportment. I reported to Lord Massey, in terms of unexceptionable decorum, those flattering expressions of homage which sometimes, from the lips of young men partially under the influence of wine, had taken a form somewhat too enthusiastic for literal repetition to a chivalrous and adoring husband.

Section II.—The Orphan Heiresses

Meantime, the reader has been kept long enough at Laxton to warrant me in presuming some curiosity or interest to have gathered within his mind about the mistress of the mansion. Who was Lady Carbery, what was her present position, and what had been her original position in society? All readers of Bishop Jeremy Taylor[1] must be aware of that

[1] The Life of Jeremy Taylor, by Reginald Heber, Bishop of Calcutta, is most elaborately incorrect. From want of research, and a chronology in some places thoroughly erroneous, various important facts are utterly mis-stated; and, what is most to be regretted, in a matter deeply affecting the bishop's candour and Christian charity—viz., a controversial correspondence with a Somersetshire Dissenting clergyman—the wildest misconception has vitiated the entire result. That fractional and splintered condition, into which some person had cut up the controversy with a view to his own more convenient study

religious Lady Carbery who was the munificent (and, for her kindness, one might say the filial) patroness of the all-eloquent and subtle divine. She died before the Restoration, and, consequently, before her spiritual director could have ascended the Episcopal throne. The title of Carbery was at that time an earldom; the earl married again, and his second countess was also a devout patroness of Taylor. Having no peerage at hand, I do not know by what mode of derivation the modern title of the nineteenth century had descended from the old one of the seventeenth. I presume that some collateral branch of the original family had succeeded to the barony when the limitations of the original settlement had extinguished the earldom. But to me, who saw revived another religious Lady Carbery, distinguished for her beauty and accomplishments, it was interesting to read of the two successive ladies who had borne that title 160 years before, and whom no reader of Jeremy Taylor is ever allowed to forget, since almost all his books are dedicated to one or other of the pious family that had protected him. Once more there was a religious Lady Carbery, supporting locally the Church of England, patronizing schools, diffusing the most extensive relief to every mode of indigence or distress:

of its chief elements, Heber had misconceived as the actual form in which these parts had been originally exchanged between the disputants—a blunder of the worst consequence, and having the effect of translating general expressions (such as recorded a moral indignation against ancient fallacies or evasions connected with the dispute) into direct ebullitions of scorn or displeasure personally against his immediate antagonist. And the charge of intolerance and defective charity becomes thus very much stronger against the poor bishop, because it takes the shape of a confession extorted by mere force of truth from an else reluctant apologist, that would most gladly have denied everything that he *could* deny. The Life needs more than ever to be accurately written, since it has been thus chaotically mis-narrated by a prelate of so much undeniable talent. I once began a very elaborate life myself, and in these words:—"Jeremy Taylor, the most eloquent and the subtlest of Christian philosophers, was the son of a barber, and the son-in-law of a king"—alluding to the tradition (imperfectly verified, I believe) that he married an illegitimate daughter of Charles I. But this sketch was begun more than thirty years ago; and I retired from the labour as too overwhelmingly exacting in all that related to the philosophy and theology of that man so "myriad-minded," and of that century so anarchical.

a century and a half ago such a Lady Carbery was in South Wales, at the "Golden Grove"; now such another Lady Carbery was in central England, at Laxton.[1] The two cases, divided by six generations, interchanged a reciprocal interest, since in both cases it was young ladies, under the age of 30, that originated the movement, and in both cases these ladies bore the same title; and I will therefore retrace rapidly the outline of that contemporary case so familiarly known to myself.

Colonel Watson and General Smith had been amongst the earliest friends of my mother's family. Both served for many years in India: the first in the Company's army, the other upon the staff of the King's forces in that country. Each, about the same time, made a visit to England, and each of them, I believe, with the same principal purpose of providing for the education of his daughter; for each happened to have one sole child, which child, in each case, was a girl of singular beauty; and both of these little ladies were entitled to very large fortunes. The Colonel and the General being on

[1] De Quincey's references in this paragraph to a previous Lady Carbery may be explained thus:—Richard Vaughan, 2d Earl of Carbery in the Irish peerage and 1st Baron Vaughan in the English, a conspicuous Royalist in the Civil Wars, had been married three times. It was the second of his wives, the Countess Frances, that was the "devout patroness" of Jeremy Taylor during the time of that divine's residence on the Earl's estate of the Golden Grove in Caermarthenshire for shelter after the King's cause and the cause of the Anglican Church had been crushed. She died in 1650; but the intimacy of the Carbery family with Jeremy Taylor, and the hospitality to him at the Golden Grove, were kept up in the time of the third Countess, who was married to the Earl about 1653. She was no other than that Lady Alice Egerton, youngest daughter of the Earl of Bridgewater, who is immortal independently as "The Lady" in Milton's *Comus*, having acted in that part on the original performance of the masque at Ludlow Castle, in 1634, before her father and mother and their assembled guests, on the occasion of her father's assumption of the duties of the Presidency of Wales. She was then a girl of about fourteen; and the masque, in fact, had been written chiefly for her and her two young brothers. A remarkable thing in her life is that, as her husband the Earl of Carbery was appointed to the Presidency of Wales after the Restoration, she resumed in her later years, as Lady Carbery, the President's wife, acquaintance with the very castle in which she had performed her part in Milton's masque so long before, when she was but the young Lady Alice Egerton.—M.

brotherly terms of intimacy, resolved to combine their plans for the welfare of their daughters. What they wanted was, not a lady that could teach them any special arts or accomplishments—all these could be purchased; but the two qualifications indispensable for the difficult situation of lady-superintendent over two children so singularly separated from all relatives whatever were, in the first place, knowledge of the world, and integrity for keeping at a distance all showy adventurers that might else offer themselves, with unusual advantages, as suitors for the favour of two great heiresses; and secondly, manners exquisitely polished. Looking to that last requisition, it seems romantic to mention that the lady selected for the post, with the fullest approbation of both officers, was one who began life as the daughter of a little Lincolnshire farmer. What her maiden name had been, I do not at this moment remember; but this name was of very little importance, being soon merged in that of Harvey, bestowed on her at the altar by a country gentleman. The squire,—not very rich, I believe, but rich enough to rank as a matrimonial prize in the lottery of a country girl whom one single step of descent in life might have brought within sight of menial service,—had been captivated by the young woman's beauty; and this, at that period, when accompanied by the advantages of youth, must have been resplendent. I, who had known her all my life down to my sixteenth year (during which year she died), and who naturally, therefore, referred her origin back to some remote ancestral generation, nevertheless, in her sole case, was made to feel that there might be some justification for the Church of England discountenancing in her Liturgy marriage with your great-grandmother: "neither shalt thou marry thy great-grandfather's widow." She, poor thing! at that time was thinking little of marriage; for even then, though known only to herself and her *femme de chambre*, that dreadful organic malady (cancer) was raising its adder's crest, under which finally she died. But, in spite of languor interchanging continually with disfiguring anguish, she still impressed one as a regal beauty. Her person, indeed, and figure *would* have tended towards such a standard; but all was counteracted and thrown back into the mould of sweet

natural womanhood by the cherubic beauty of her features. These it was—these features, so purely child-like—that reconciled me in a moment of time to great-grandmotherhood. The stories about Ninon de l'Enclos are French fables—speaking plainly, are falsehoods;—and sorry I am that a nation so amiable as the French should habitually disregard truth, when coming into collision with their love for the extravagant. But, if anything could reconcile me to these monstrous old fibs about Ninon at ninety, it would be the remembrance of this English enchantress on the high road to seventy. Guess, reader, what she must have been at twenty-eight to thirty-two, when she became the widow of the Gerenian horseman, Harvey. How bewitching she must have looked in her widow's caps! So had once thought Colonel Watson, who happened to be in England at that period; and to the charming widow this man of war propounded his hand in marriage. This hand—this martial hand—for reason inexplicable to me, Mrs. Harvey declined; and the Colonel bounced off in a rage to Bengal. There were others who saw young Mrs. Harvey as well as Colonel Watson. And amongst them was an ancient German gentleman, to what century belonging I do not know, who had every possible bad quality known to European experience, and a solitary good one—viz., eight hundred thousand pounds sterling. The man's name was Schreiber. Schreiber was an aggregate resulting from the conflux of all conceivable bad qualities. That was the elementary base of Schreiber; and the superstructure, or Corinthian decoration of his frontispiece, was that Schreiber cultivated one sole science—viz., the science of taking snuff. Here were two separate objects for contemplation: one, bright as Aurora—that radiant Koh-i-noor, or mountain of light—the eight hundred thousand pounds; the other, sad, fuscous, begrimed with the snuff of ages—viz., the most ancient Schreiber. Ah! if they *could* have been divided—these twin yokefellows—and that ladies might have the privilege of choosing between them! For the moment there was no prudent course open to Mrs. Harvey, but that of marrying Schreiber (which she did, and survived); and subsequently, when the state of the market became favourable to such "conversions"

of stock, then the new Mrs. Schreiber parted from Schreiber, and disposed of her interest in Schreiber at a settled rate in three per cent consols and terminable annuities—for every *coupon* of Schreiber receiving a *bonus* of so many thousand pounds, paid down according to the rate agreed on by the lawyers of the two parties; or, strictly speaking, *quarrelled on* between the adverse factions; for agreement it was hard to effect upon any point. The deadly fear which had been breathed into him by Mrs. Schreiber's scale of expenditure in a Park Lane House proved her most salutary ally. Coerced by this horrid vision, Schreiber consented (which else he never would have done) to grant her an allowance, for life, of about two thousand per annum. Could *that* be reckoned an anodyne for the torment connected with a course of Schreiber? I pretend to no opinion.

Such were the facts: and exactly at this point in her career had Mrs. Schreiber arrived, when, once more, Colonel Watson and General Smith were visiting England, and for the last time, on the errand of settling permanently some suitable establishment for their two infant daughters. The superintendence of this they desired to devolve upon some lady, qualified by her manners and her connexions for introducing the young ladies, when old enough, into general society. Mrs. Schreiber was the very person required. Intellectually she had no great pretensions; but these she did not need: her character was irreproachable, her manners were polished, and her own income placed her far above all mercenary temptations. She had not thought fit to accept the station of Colonel Watson's wife, but some unavowed feeling prompted her to undertake with enthusiasm the duties of a mother to the Colonel's daughter. Chiefly on Miss Watson's account it was at first that she extended her maternal cares to General Smith's daughter; but, very soon, so sweet and winning was the disposition of Miss Smith that Mrs. Schreiber apparently loved *her* the best.

Both, however, appeared under a combination of circumstances too singularly romantic to fail of creating an interest that was universal. Both were solitary children, unchallenged by any relatives. Neither had ever known what it was to taste of love, paternal or maternal. Their mothers had been

long dead—not consciously seen by either ; and their fathers, not surviving their last departure from home long enough to see them again, died before returning from India. What a world of desolation seemed to exist for them ! How silent was every hall into which, by natural right, they should have had entrance ! Several people, kind, cordial people, men and women, were scattered over England, that, during their days of infancy, would have delighted to receive them ; but, by some fatality, when they reached their fifteenth year, and might have been deemed old enough to undertake visits, all of these paternal friends, except two, had died ; nor had they, by that time, any relatives at all that remained alive, or were eligible as associates. Strange, indeed, was the contrast between the silent past of their lives and that populous future to which their large fortunes would probably introduce them. Throw open a door in the rear that should lay bare the long vista of chambers through which their childhood might symbolically be represented as having travelled,—what silence !—what solemn solitude ! Open a door in advance that should do the same figurative office for the future—suddenly what a jubilation ! what a tumult of festal greetings !

But the succeeding stages of life did not, perhaps, in either case, fully correspond to the early promise. Rank and station the two young ladies attained ; but rank and station do not always throw people upon prominent stages of action or display. Many a family, possessing both rank and wealth, and not undistinguished possibly by natural endowments of an order fitted for brilliant popularity, never emerge from obscurity, or not into any splendour that can be called national ; sometimes, perhaps, from a temper unfitted for worldly struggles in the head of the house ; possibly from a haughty, possibly a dignified disdain of popular arts, hatred of petty rhetoric, petty sycophantic courtships, petty canvassing tricks ; or again, in many cases, because accidents of ill luck have intercepted the fair proportion of success due to the merits of the person ; whence, oftentimes, a hasty self-surrender to impulses of permanent disgust. But, more frequently than any other cause, I fancy that impatience of the long struggle required for any distinguished success interferes to thin the ranks of competitors for the prizes of

public ambition. Perseverance is soon refrigerated in those who fall back under any result, defeated or not defeated, upon splendid mansions and luxuries of every kind, already far beyond their needs or their wishes. The soldier described by the Roman satirist as one who had lost his purse was likely enough, under the desperation of his misfortune, to see nothing formidable in any obstacle that crossed his path towards another supplementary purse ; whilst the very same obstacle might reasonably alarm one who, in retreating, fell back under the battlements of twenty thousand per annum. In the present case, there was nothing at all to move wonder in the final result under so continual a siege of temptation from the seductions of voluptuous ease ; the only wonder is, that one of the young ladies—viz., Miss Watson, whose mind was masculine, and in some directions aspiring—should so readily have acquiesced in a result which she might have anticipated from the beginning.

Happy was the childhood, happy the early dawn of womanhood, which these two young ladies passed under the guardianship of Mrs. Schreiber. Education in those days was not the austere old lady that she is now. At least, in the case of young ladies, her exactions were merciful and considerate. If Miss Smith sang pretty well, and Miss Watson *very* well, and with the power of singing difficult *part* music at sight, they did so for the same reason that the lark sings, and chiefly under the same gentle tuition—that of nature, glad almighty nature, breathing inspiration from her Delphic tripod of happiness, and health, and hope. Mrs. Schreiber pretended to no intellectual gifts whatever, and yet, practically, she was wiser than many who have the greatest. First of all other tasks which she imposed upon her wards, was that of daily exercise, and exercise carried to *excess*. She insisted upon four hours' exercise daily ; and, as young ladies walk fast, *that* would have yielded, at the rate of $3\frac{1}{3}$ miles per hour, $13 + \frac{1}{3}$ miles. But only $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours were given to walking ; the other $1\frac{1}{2}$ to riding. No day was a day of rest : absolutely none. Days so stormy that they "kept the raven to her nest," snow the heaviest, winds the most frantic, were never listened to as any ground of reprieve from the ordinary exaction. I once knew (that is, not

personally, for I never saw her, but through the reports of her many friends) an intrepid lady,[1] living in the city of London (*i.e.*, techinally the *city*, as opposed to Westminster, &c., Mary-le-bone, &c.), who made a point of turning out her new-born infants for a pretty long airing even on the day of their birth. It made no difference to her whether the month were July or January; good undeniable air is to be had in either month. Once only she was baffled, and most indignant it made her, because the little thing chose to be born at half-past nine P.M.; so that, by the time its toilet was finished, bonnet and cloak all properly adjusted, the watchman was calling, "Past eleven, and a cloudy night"; upon which, most reluctantly, she was obliged to countermand the orders for that day's exercise, and considered herself, like the Emperor Titus, to have lost a day. But what came of the London lady's or of Mrs. Schreiber's Spartan discipline? Did the little blind kittens of Gracechurch Street, who were ordered by their Penthesiléan mamma, on the very day of their nativity, to face the most cruel winds—did *they*, or did Mrs. Schreiber's wards, justify, in after life, this fierce discipline by commensurate results of hardiness? In words written beyond all doubt by Shakspeare, though not generally recognised as his, it might have been said to any one of this Amazonian brood:—

> "Now mild may be thy life;
> For a more blust'rous birth had never babe.
> Quiet and gentle be thy temperature;
> For thou'rt the rudeliest welcomed to this world
> That e'er was woman's child. Happy be the sequel;
> Thou hast as chiding a nativity
> As fire, air, water, earth, and heaven can make,
> To herald thee from darkness!"—*Pericles, Act III.*

As to the city kittens, I heard that the treatment prospered; but the man who reported this added that by original constitution they were as strong as Meaux's dray-horses; and

[1] If I remember rightly, some account is given of this palæstric lady and her stern Pædo-gymnastics, in a clever book on household medicine and surgery under circumstances of inevitable seclusion from professional aid, written about the year 1820-22, by Mr. Haden, a surgeon of London.

thus, after all, they may simply illustrate the old logical *dictum* ascribed to some medical man—that the reason why London children of the wealthier classes are noticeable even to a proverb for their robustness and bloom, is because none but those who are already vigorous to excess, and who start with advantages of health far beyond the average scale, have much chance of surviving that most searching quarantine which in such [1] an atmosphere they are summoned to weather at starting. Coming, however, to the special case of Mrs. Schreiber's household, I am bound to report, that in no instance have I known young ladies so thoroughly steeled against all the ordinary host of petty maladies which, by way of antithesis to the capital warfare of dangerous complaints, might be called the *guérilla* nosology: influenza, for instance, in milder forms, catarrh, headache, toothache, dyspepsy in transitory shapes, &c. Always the spirits of the two girls were exuberant; the enjoyment of life seemed to be intense, and never did I know either of them to suffer from *ennui*. My conscious knowledge of them commenced when I was about two years old, they being from ten to

[1] For myself, meantime, I am far from assenting to all the romantic abuse applied to the sewerage and the churchyards of London, and even more violently to the river Thames. As a tidal river, even beyond the metropolitan bridges, the Thames undoubtedly does much towards cleansing the atmosphere, whatever may be the condition of its waters. And one most erroneous postulate there is from which the "Times" starts in all its arguments—viz. this, that, supposing the Thames to be even a vast sewer, in short, the *cloaca maxima* of London, there is in that arrangement of things any special reproach applying to our mighty English capital. On the contrary, *all* great cities that ever were founded have sought out, as their first and elementary condition, the adjacency of some great cleansing river. In the long process of development through which cities pass, commerce and other functions of civilisation come to usurp upon the earlier functions of such rivers, and sometimes (through increasing efforts of luxurious refinement) may come entirely to absorb them. But, in the infancy of every great city, the chief function for which she looks to her river is that of purification. Be thou my huge *cloaca*, says infant Babylon to the Euphrates, says infant Nineveh to the Tigris, says infant Rome to the Tiber. So far is that reproach from having any special application to London. Smoke is not unwholesome; in many circumstances it is salubrious, as a counter-agent to worse influences. Even sewage is chiefly insalubrious from its moisture, and not, in any degree yet demonstrated, from its odour.

twelve years older. Mrs. Schreiber had been amongst my mother's earliest friends as Mrs. Harvey, and in days when my mother had opportunities of doing her seasonable services. And as there were three special advantages which adorned my mother, and which ranked in Mrs. Schreiber's estimate as the highest which earth could show—viz. : 1°, that she spoke and wrote English with singular elegance ; 2°, that her manners were eminently polished ; and 3°, that, even in that early stage of my mother's life, a certain tone of religiosity and even of ascetic devotion, was already diffused as a luminous mist that served to exalt the colouring of her morality. To this extent Mrs. Schreiber approved of religion ; but nothing of a sectarian cast could she have tolerated ; nor had she anything of that nature to apprehend from my mother. Viewing my mother, therefore, as a pure model of an English matron, and feeling for her, besides, a deeper sentiment of friendship and affection than for anybody else on her visiting list, it was natural enough that she should come with her wards on an annual visit to "The Farm" (a pretty rustic dwelling occupied by my father in the neighbourhood of Manchester), and subsequently (when *that* arose) to Greenhay.[1] As my father always retained a town-house

[1] "*Greenhay*":—As this name might, under a false interpretation, seem absurd as including incongruous elements, I ought, in justification of my mother, who devised the name, to have mentioned that *hay* was meant for the old English word (derived from the old French word *haie*) indicating a rural enclosure. Conventionally, a *hay* or *haie* was understood to mean a country-house within a verdant ring-fence, narrower than a park : which word park, in Scotch use, means any enclosure whatever, though not twelve feet square ; but in English use (witness Captain Burt's wager about Culloden parks) means an enclosure measured by square miles, and usually accounted to want its appropriate furniture, unless tenanted by deer. By the way, it is a singular illustration of a fact illustrated in one way or other every hour—viz., of the imperfect knowledge which England possesses of England—that, within these last eight or nine months, I saw in the "Illustrated London News" an article assuming that the red deer was unknown in England. Whereas, if the writer had ever been at the English lakes during the hunting season, he might have seen it actually hunted over Martindale Forest and its purlieus. Or, again, in Devonshire and Cornwall, over Dartmoor, &c., and, I believe, in many other regions, though naturally narrowing as civilisation widens. The writer is equally wrong in supposing the prevailing deer of our parks to be

in Manchester (somewhere in Fountain Street)—and, though a plain, unpretending man, was literary to the extent of having written a book [1]—all things were so arranged that there was no possibility of any commercial mementoes ever penetrating to the rural retreat of his family; such mementoes, I mean, as, by reviving painful recollections of that ancient Schreiber who was or ought to be by this time extinct, would naturally be odious and distressing. Here, therefore, liberated from all jealousy of overlooking eyes, such as haunted persons of their expectations at Brighton, Weymouth, Sidmouth, or Bath, Miss Smith and Miss Watson used to surrender themselves without restraint to their glad animal impulses of girlish gaiety, like the fawns of antelopes when suddenly transferred from tiger-haunted thickets to the serene preserves of secluded rajahs. On these visits it was that I, as a young pet whom they carried about like a doll from my second to my eighth or ninth year, learned to know them, so as to take a fraternal interest in the succeeding periods of their lives. Their fathers I certainly had not seen; nor had they, consciously. These two fathers must both have died in India, before my inquiries had begun to travel in that direction. But, as old acquaintances of my mother's, both had visited The Farm before I was born; and about General Smith, in particular, there had survived amongst the servants a remembrance which seemed to us (that is, to them and to myself) ludicrously awful, though at that time the practice was common throughout our Indian possessions. He had a Hindoo servant with him; and this servant every night stretched himself along the "sill," or outer threshold of the door; so that he *might* have been trodden on by the General when retiring to rest; and from this it was but a moderate step in advance to say that he *was* trodden on. Upon which basis many other wonders were naturally reared. Miss Smith's father therefore furnished matter for a not very amiable tradition; but Miss

the *roe* deer, which are very little known. It is the *fallow* deer that chiefly people our parks. Red deer were also found at Blenheim in Oxfordshire, when it was visited by Dr. Johnson, as may be seen in "Boswell."

[1] See *ante*, pp. 21, 22, and footnote there.—M.

Smith herself was the sweetest-tempered and the loveliest of girls, and the most thoroughly English in the style of her beauty. Far different every way was Miss Watson. In person she was a finished beauty of the very highest pretensions, and generally recognised as such: that is to say, her figure was fine and queenly; her features were exquisitely cut, as regarded their forms and the correspondences of their parts; and usually by artists her face was said to be Grecian. Perhaps the nostrils, mouth, and forehead might be so; but nothing could be less Grecian, or more eccentric in form and position, than the eyes. They were placed obliquely, in a way that I do not remember to have seen repeated in any other face whatever. Large they were, and particularly long, tending to an almond shape; equally strange, in fact, as to colour, shape, and position: but the remarkable position of these eyes would have absorbed your gaze to the obliteration of all other features or peculiarities in the face, were it not for one other even more remarkable distinction affecting her complexion: this lay in a suffusion that mantled upon her cheeks, of a colour amounting almost to carmine. Perhaps it might be no more than what Pindar meant by the πορφύρεον φῶς ἐρώτος, which Gray has falsely[1] translated as "the bloom of young desire, and PURPLE light of love." It was not unpleasing, and gave a lustre to the eyes, but it added to the eccentricity of the face; and by all strangers it

[1] *Falsely*, because πορφύρεος rarely, perhaps, means in the Greek use what we mean properly by *purple* and *could* not mean it in the Pindaric passage; much oftener it denotes some shade of *crimson*, or else of *puniceus*, or blood-red. Gibbon was never more mistaken than when he argued that all the endless disputing about the *purpureus* of the ancients might have been evaded by attending to its Greek designation—viz., *porphyry*-coloured: since, said he, porphyry is always of the same colour. Not at all. Porphyry, I have heard, runs through as large a gamut of hues as marble: but if this should be an exaggeration, at all events porphyry is far from being so monochromatic as Gibbon's argument would presume. The truth is, colours were as loosely and latitudinarially distinguished by the Greeks and Romans as degrees of affinity and consanguinity are everywhere. *My son-in-law*, says a woman, and she means *my step-son*. *My cousin*, she says, and she means any mode of relationship in the wide, wide world. *Nos neveux*, says a French writer, and means—*not our nephews, but our grandchildren*, or more generally our *descendants*.

was presumed to be an artificial colour, resulting from some mode of applying a preparation more brilliant than rouge. But to us children, so constantly admitted to her toilet, it was well known to be entirely natural. Generally speaking, it is not likely to assist the effect of a young woman's charms, that she presents any such variety in her style of countenance as could naturally be called *odd*. But Miss Watson, by the somewhat scenical effect resulting from the harmony between her fine figure and her fine countenance, triumphed over all that might else have been thought a blemish : and when she was presented at court on occasion of her marriage, the king himself pronounced her, to friends of Mrs. Schreiber, the most splendid of all the brides that had yet given lustre to his reign. In such cases the judgments of rustic undisciplined tastes, though marked by narrowness, and often by involuntary obedience to vulgar ideals (which, for instance, makes them insensible to all the deep sanctities of beauty that sleep amongst the Italian varieties of the Madonna face), is not without its appropriate truth. Servants and rustics all thrilled in sympathy with the sweet English loveliness of Miss Smith : but all alike acknowledged with spontaneous looks of homage the fine presence and finished beauty of Miss Watson. Naturally, from the splendour with which they were surrounded, and the notoriety of their great expectations—so much to dazzle in one direction, and, on the other hand, something for as tender a sentiment as pity, in the fact of both from so early an age having been united in the calamity of orphanage—go where they might, these young women drew all eyes upon themselves ; and, from the *audible* comparisons sometimes made between them, it might be imagined that, if ever there were a situation fitted to nourish rivalship and jealousy between two girls, here it might be anticipated in daily operation. But, left to themselves, the yearnings of the female heart tend naturally towards what is noble ; and, unless where it has been tried too heavily by artificial incitements applied to the pride, I do not believe that women generally are disposed to any unfriendly jealousy of each other. Why should they ? Almost every woman, when strengthened in those charms which nature has given to her by such as she can in many ways give to herself, must

feel that she has her own separate domain of empire, unaffected by the most sovereign beauty upon earth. Every man that ever existed has probably his own peculiar talent (if only it were detected), in which he would be found to excel all the rest of his race. And in every female face possessing any attractions at all, no matter what may be her general inferiority, there lurks some secret peculiarity of expression—some mesmeric individuality—which is valid within its narrower range—limited superiority over the supreme of beauties within a narrow circle. It is unintelligibly, but mesmerically potent, this secret fascination attached to features oftentimes that are absolutely plain ; and, as one of many cases within my own range of positive experience, I remember, in confirmation, at this moment, that in a clergyman's family, counting three daughters, all on a visit to my mother, the youngest, Miss F—— P——, who was strikingly and memorably plain, never walked out on the Clifton Downs unattended, but she was followed home by a crowd of admiring men, anxious to learn her rank and abode ; whilst the middle sister, eminently handsome, levied no such *visible* tribute of admiration on the public. I mention this fact—one of a thousand similar facts—simply by way of reminding the reader of what he must himself have often witnessed, viz., that no woman is condemned by nature to any ignoble necessity of repining against the power of other women ; her own may be far more confined, but within its own circle may possibly, measured against that of the haughtiest beauty, be the profounder. However, waiving the question thus generally put here, and as it specially affected these two young women that virtually were sisters, any question of precedency in power or display, when brought into collision with sisterly affection, had not a momentary existence. Each had soon redundant proofs of her own power to attract suitors without end ; and, for the more or the less, *that* was felt to be a matter of accident. Never on this earth, I am satisfied, did that pure sisterly love breathe a more steady inspiration than now into the hearts and through the acts of these two generous girls : neither was there any sacrifice which either would have refused *to* or *for* the other. The period, however, was now rapidly shortening during which they would have

any opportunity for testifying this reciprocal love. Suitors were flocking around them, as rank as cormorants in a storm. The grim old Chancellor (one, if not both, of the young ladies having been a ward in Chancery) had all his legal jealousies awakened on their behalf. The worshipful order of *adventurers* and *fortune-hunters*, at that time chiefly imported from Ireland, as in times more recent from Germany and other moustachoed parts of the Continent, could not live under the raking fire of Mrs. Schreiber, on the one side, with her female tact and her knowledge of life, and of the Chancellor, with his huge discretional power, on the other. That particular Chancellor whom the chronology of the case brought chiefly into connexion with Miss Watson's interests was (if my childish remembrances do not greatly mislead me) the iracund Lord Thurlow. Lovers and wooers this grim lawyer regarded as the most impertinent order of animals in universal zoology ; and of these, in Miss Watson's case, he had a whole menagerie to tend. Penelope, according to some schoolboy remembrance of mine, had 118 suitors. These young ladies had almost as many. Heavens ! what a crew of Comus to follow or to lead. And what a suitable person was this truculent old lord on the woolsack to enact the part of shepherd—Corydon, suppose, or Alphesibœus—to this goodly set of lambs ! How he must have admired the hero of the "Odyssey," who in one way or other accounted for all the wooers that "sorned" upon his house, and had a receipt for their bodies from the gravedigger of Ithaca ! But even this wily descendant of Sisyphus would have found it no such easy matter to deal with the English suitors, who were not the feeble voluptuaries of the Ionian Islands, that suffered themselves to be butchered as unresistingly as sheep in the shambles, actually standing at one end of a banqueting-room to be shot at with bows and arrows, not having pluck enough to make a rush, but were *game* men ; all young, strong, rich, and in most cases technically "noble" ; all, besides, contending for one or other of two prizes a thousand times better fitted to inspire romantic ardour than the poor withered Penelope.

One, by the way, amongst these suitors (I speak of those who addressed Miss Watson) merits a separate commemoration, as having drawn from Sheridan his very happiest *im-*

promptu—and an *impromptu* that was really such—(the rarest of all things from Sheridan). This was Lord Belgrave, eldest son of Lord Grosvenor, then an earl, but at some period, long subsequent to this, raised to the marquisate of Westminster—a title naturally suggesting in itself a connexion with the vast Grosvenor property, sweeping across the whole area of that most aristocratic region in the metropolis now called *Belgravia*, which was then a name unknown; and this Hesperian region had as yet no architectural value, and consequently no ground-rent value, simply because the world of fashion and distinction had as yet not expanded itself in that direction. In those days the territorial importance of this great house rested exclusively upon its connexion with the county of Chester. In this connexion it was that the young Viscount Belgrave had been introduced, by his family interest, into the House of Commons; he had delivered his maiden speech with some effect; and had been heard favourably on various subsequent occasions; on one of which it was that, to the extreme surprise of the House, he terminated his speech with a passage from Demosthenes—not presented in English, but in sounding Attic Greek. Latin is a privileged dialect in Parliament. But Greek! It would not have been at all more startling to the usages of the House, had his lordship quoted Persic or Telinga. Still, though felt as something verging on the ridiculous, there was an indulgent feeling to a young man fresh from academic bowers, which would not have protected a mature man of the world. Everybody bit his lips, and as yet did *not* laugh. But the final issue stood on the edge of a razor. A gas, an inflammable atmosphere, was trembling sympathetically through the whole excited audience; all depended on a match being applied to this gas whilst yet in the very act of escaping. Deepest silence still prevailed; and had any commonplace member risen to address the House in an ordinary business key, all would have blown over. Unhappily for Lord Belgrave, in that critical moment up rose the one solitary man—to wit, Sheridan—whose look, whose voice, whose traditional character, formed a prologue to what was coming. Here let the reader understand that, throughout the "Iliad," all speeches or commands, questions or answers, are

introduced by Homer under some peculiar formula. For instance, replies are usually introduced thus :—

"*But him answering thus address'd the sovereign Agamemnon*" ;

or, in sonorous Greek :—

"Ton d' apameibomenos prosephé kreiōn Agamemnon" ;

or, again, according to the circumstances :—

"But him sternly surveying saluted the swift-footed Achilles" ;
"Ton d' ar', upodra idon, prosephé podas okus Achilleus."

This being premised, and that every one of the audience, though pretending to no Greek, yet from his schoolboy remembrances was as well acquainted with these *formulæ* as with the scriptural formula of *Verily, verily, I say unto you*, &c., Sheridan, without needing to break its force by explanations, solemnly opened thus :—

"*Ton d' apameibomenos prosephé Sheridanios heros.*"

Simply to have commenced his answer in Greek would have sufficiently met the comic expectation then thrilling the House ; but, when it happened that this Greek (so suitable to the occasion) was also the one sole morsel of Greek that everybody in that assembly understood, the effect, as may be supposed, was overwhelming, and wrapped the whole House in what might be called a fiery explosion of laughter.

Meantime, as prizes in the matrimonial lottery, and prizes in all senses, both young ladies were soon carried off. Miss Smith, whose expectations I never happened to hear estimated, married a great West India proprietor ; and Miss Watson, who (according to the popular report) would succeed to six thousand a year on her twenty-first birthday, married Lord Carbery. Miss Watson inherited also from her father something which would not generally be rated very highly—viz., a Chancery lawsuit, with the East India Company for defendant. However, if the Company is a potent antagonist, thus far it is an eligible one, that, in the event of losing the suit, the Honourable Company is solvent ; and such an event, after some nine or ten years' delay, did really befall the Company. The question at issue respected some docks

which Colonel Watson had built for the Company in some Indian port. And in the end this lawsuit, though so many years doubtful in its issue, proved very valuable to Miss Watson; I have heard (but cannot vouch for it) not less valuable than that large part of her property which had been paid over without demur upon her twenty-first birthday. Both young ladies married happily; but in marriage they found their separation, and in that separation a shock to their daily comfort which was never replaced to either. As to Miss Smith's husband, I did not know him; but Lord Carbery was every way an estimable man; in some things worthy of admiration; and his wife never ceased to esteem and admire him. But she yearned for the society of her early friend; and, this being placed out of her reach by the accidents of life, she fell early into a sort of disgust with her own advantages of wealth and station, which, promising so much, were found able to perform nothing at all in this first and last desire of her heart. A portrait of her friend hung in the drawing-room; but Lady Carbery did not willingly answer the questions that were sometimes prompted by its extraordinary loveliness. There are women to whom a female friendship is indispensable, and cannot be supplied by any companion of the other sex. That blessing, therefore, of her golden youth turned eventually into a curse for her after-life; for I believe that, through one accident or another, they never met again after they became married women. To me, as one of those who had known and loved Miss Smith, Lady Carbery always turned the more sunny side of her nature; but to the world generally she presented a chilling and somewhat severe aspect—as to a vast illusion that rested upon pillars of mockery and frauds. Honours, beauty of the first order, wealth, and the power which follows wealth as its shadow—what could these do? what *had* they done? In proportion as they had settled heavily upon herself, she had found them to entail a load of responsibility; and those claims upon her she had laboured to fulfil conscientiously; but else they had only precipitated the rupture of such ties as had given sweetness to her life.

Section III.—Female Students in Theology

From the first, therefore, I had been aware, on this visit to Laxton, that Lady Carbery had changed, and was changing. She had become religious, so much I knew from my sister's letters. And, in fact, this change had been due to her intercourse with my mother. But, in reality, her premature disgust with the world would at any rate have made her such; and, had any mode of monastic life existed for Protestants, I believe that she would before this have entered it, supposing Lord Carbery to have consented. People generally would have stated the case most erroneously; they would have said that she was sinking into gloom under religious influences; whereas the very contrary was the truth—viz., that, having sunk into gloomy discontent with life, and its miserable performances as contrasted with its promises, she sought relief and support to her wounded feelings from religion.

But the change brought with it a difficult trial to myself. She recoiled, by natural temperament and by refinement of taste, from all modes of religious enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is a large word, and in many cases I could not go along with her; but *canting* of all descriptions was odious to both of us alike. To cultivate religious knowledge in an intellectual way, she very well understood that she must study divinity. And she relied upon me for assisting her. Not that she made the mistake of ascribing to me any knowledge on that subject; but I could learn; and whatsoever I *had* learned, she knew, by experience, that I could make abundantly plain to her understanding. Wherever I did *not* understand, I was far too sincere to dissemble that fact. Where I *did* understand, I could enable *her* to understand.

On the subject of theology it was not easy indeed for anybody, man or boy, to be more ignorant than myself. My studies in that field had been none at all. Nor was this any subject for wonder, or (considering my age) for blame. In reality, to make theology into a captivating study for the young, it must be translated into controversial theology. And in what way could such a polemic interest be evoked

except through political partisanship? But such partisanship connects itself naturally with the irritability of sectarianism, and but little with the majestic repose of a church such as the Romish or the Anglican, founded upon the broad basis of national majorities, and sheltered from danger, or the sense of danger, by state protection. Dissenters stand upon another footing. The Dissenter from the national church, whether in England or in France, is reminded by his own distinguishing religious opinions of the historic struggles through which those opinions have travelled. The doctrines which give to his own sect a peculiar denomination, are also those which record its honourable political conflicts; so that his own connexion, through his religious brotherhood, with the civil history of his country, furnishes a standing motive of pride for some acquaintance more or less with divinity; since it is by deviating painfully, conscientiously, and at some periods dangerously, from the established divinity, that his fathers have achieved their station in the great drama of the national evolution.

But, whilst I was ignorant of theology, as a direct and separate branch of study, the points are so many at which theology inosculates with philosophy, and with endless casual and random suggestions of the self-prompted reason, that inevitably from that same moment in which I began to find a motive for directing my thoughts to this new subject, I wanted not something to say that might have perplexed an antagonist, or (in default of such a vicious associate) that might have amused a friend, more especially a friend so predisposed to a high estimate of myself as Lady Carbery. Sometimes I did more than amuse her: I startled her, and I even startled myself, with distinctions that to this hour strike me as profoundly just, and as undeniably novel. Two out of many I will here repeat; and with the more confidence, that in these two I can be sure of repeating the exact thoughts; whereas, in very many other cases, it would not be so certain that they might not have been insensibly modified by cross-lights or disturbing shadows from intervening speculations.

1. Lady Carbery one day told me that she could not see any reasonable ground for what is said of Christ, and else-

where of John the Baptist, that he opened his mission by preaching "repentance." Why "repentance"? Why then, more than at any other time? Her reason for addressing this remark to me was, that she fancied there might be some error in the translation of the Greek expression. I replied that, in my opinion, there was; and that I had myself always been irritated by the entire irrelevance of the English word, and by something very like cant, on which the whole burden of the passage is thrown. How was it any natural preparation for a vast spiritual revolution, that men should first of all acknowledge any special duty of repentance? The repentance, if any movement of that nature could intelligibly be supposed called for, should more naturally *follow* this great revolution—which, as yet, both in its principle and in its purpose, was altogether mysterious—than herald it, or ground it. In my opinion, the Greek word *metanoia* concealed a most profound meaning—a meaning of prodigious compass—which bore no allusion to any ideas whatever of repentance. The *meta* carried with it an emphatic expression of its original idea—the idea of transfer, of translation, of transformation; or, if we prefer a Grecian to a Roman apparelling, the idea of a *metamorphosis*. And this idea, to what is it applied? Upon what object is this idea of spiritual transfiguration made to bear? Simply upon the *noetic* or intellectual faculty—the faculty of shaping and conceiving things under their true relations. The holy herald of Christ, and Christ himself the finisher of prophecy, made proclamation alike of the same mysterious summons, as a baptism or rite of initiation—viz., Μετανοεῖτε. Henceforth transfigure your theory of moral truth; the old theory is laid aside as infinitely insufficient; a new and spiritual revelation is established. *Metanoeite*—contemplate moral truth as radiating from a new centre: apprehend it under transfigured relations.

John the Baptist, like other earlier prophets, delivered a message which, probably enough, he did not himself more than dimly understand, and never in its full compass of meaning. Christ occupied another station. Not only was he the original Interpreter, but he was himself the Author—Founder, at once, and Finisher—of that great transfiguration

applied to ethics, which he and the Baptist alike announced as forming the code for the new and revolutionary era now opening its endless career. The human race was summoned to bring a transfiguring sense and spirit of interpretation (*metanoia*) to a transfigured ethics—an altered organ to an altered object. This is by far the grandest miracle recorded in Scripture. No exhibition of blank power—not the arresting of the earth's motion—not the calling back of the dead unto life—can approach in grandeur to this miracle which we all daily behold: viz., the inconceivable mystery of having written and sculptured upon the tablets of man's heart a new code of moral distinctions, all modifying—many reversing—the old ones. What would have been thought of any prophet, if he should have promised to transfigure the celestial mechanics; if he had said, I will create a new pole-star, a new zodiac, and new laws of gravitation; briefly, I will make new earth and new heavens? And yet a thousand times more awful it was to undertake the writing of new laws upon the spiritual conscience of man. *Metanoeite* (was the cry from the wilderness), wheel into a new centre your moral system; *geocentric* has that system been up to this hour—that is, having earth and the earthly for its starting-point; henceforward make it *heliocentric* (that is, with the sun, or the heavenly, for its principle of motion).

2. A second remark of mine was perhaps not more important, but it was, on the whole, better calculated to startle the prevailing preconceptions: for, as to the new system of morals introduced by Christ, generally speaking, it is too dimly apprehended in its great differential features to allow of its miraculous character being adequately appreciated: one flagrant illustration of which is furnished by our experience in Affghanistan, where some officers, wishing to impress Akhbar Khan with the beauty of Christianity, very judiciously repeated to him the Lord's Prayer and the Sermon on the Mount, by both of which the Khan was profoundly affected, and often recurred to them; but others, under the notion of conveying to him a more *comprehensive* view of the scriptural ethics, repeated to him the Ten Commandments; although, with the sole exception of the two first, forbidding idolatry and polytheism, there is no word in these which could have

displeased or surprised a Pagan, and therefore nothing characteristic of Christianity. Meantime my second remark was substantially this which follows :—What is a religion ? To Christians it means, over and above a mode of worship, a dogmatic (that is, a doctrinal) system ; a great body of doctrinal truths, moral and spiritual. But to the ancients (to the Greeks and Romans, for instance) it meant nothing of the kind. A religion was simply a *cultus*, a *θρησκεία*, a mode of ritual worship, in which there might be two differences, viz. :—1. As to the particular deity who furnished the motive to the worship ; 2. As to the ceremonial, or mode of conducting the worship. But in no case was there so much as a pretence of communicating any religious truths, far less any moral truths. The obstinate error rooted in modern minds is, that, doubtless, the moral instruction was bad, as being heathen ; but that still it was as good as heathen opportunities allowed it to be. No mistake can be greater. Moral instruction had no existence even in the plan or intention of the religious service. The Pagan priest or flamen never dreamed of any function like that of *teaching* as in any way connected with his office. He no more undertook to teach morals than to teach geography or cookery. He taught nothing. What he undertook was simply to *do*, viz., to present authoritatively (that is, authorized and supported by some civil community, Corinth, or Athens, or Rome, which he represented) the homage and gratitude of that community to the particular deity adored. As to morals or just opinions upon the relations to man of the several divinities, all this was resigned to the teaching of nature ; and for any polemic functions the teaching was resigned to the professional philosophers — academic, peripatetic, stoic, &c. By religion it was utterly ignored.

The reader must do me the favour to fix his attention upon the real question at issue. What I say—what then I said to Lady Carbery—is this ;—that, by failing to notice as a *differential* feature of Christianity this involution of a doctrinal part, we elevate Paganism to a dignity which it never dreamed of. Thus, for instance, in the Eleusinian mysteries, what was the main business transacted ? I, for my part, in harmony with my universal theory on this subject—viz., that

there could be no doctrinal truth delivered in a Pagan religion—have always maintained that the only end and purpose of the mysteries was a more solemn and impressive worship of a particular goddess. Warburton, on the other hand, would insist upon it that some great affirmative doctrines, interesting to man, such as the immortality of the soul, a futurity of retribution, &c., might be here commemorated. And now, nearly a hundred years after Warburton, what is the opinion of scholars upon this point? Two of the latest and profoundest I will cite :—1. Lobeck, in his "Aglaophamus," expressly repels all such notions ; 2. Otfried Mueller, in the 12th chapter, 24th section, of his "Introduction to a System of Mythology," says :—"I have here gone on the assumption which I consider unavoidable, that there was no regular instruction, no dogmatical communication, connected with the Grecian worship in general. *There could be nothing* of the kind introduced into the public service from the way in which it was conducted, for the priest *did not address the people at all.*" These opinions, which exactly tallied with my own assertion to Lady Carbery, that all religion amongst the Pagans resolved itself into a mere system of ceremonial worship, a pompous and elaborate *cultus*, were not brought forward in Germany until about ten or twelve years ago ; whereas my doctrine was expressly insisted on in 1800—*i.e.*, forty years earlier than any of these German writers had turned their thoughts in that direction.

Had I then really all that originality on this subject which for many years I secretly claimed? Substantially I had, because this great distinction between the modern (or Christian) idea of "a religion," and the ancient (or Pagan) idea of "a religion," I had nowhere openly seen expressed in words. To myself exclusively I was indebted for it. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that this conception must have been long ago germinating in the world, and perhaps bearing fruit. This is past all denial, since, about thirteen or fourteen years ago, I read in some journal (a French journal, I think) this statement ; viz., that some Oriental people—Turks, according to my present impression, but it might have been Arabs—make an old traditional distinction (so said the French journal) between what they call "religions of the book" and

all other religions. The religions of the book, according to them, are three, all equally founded upon written and producible documents—viz., first, the Judaic system, resting upon the Pentateuch, or more truly, I should imagine, upon the Law and the Prophets; secondly, the Christian system, resting upon the Old and New Testaments; thirdly, the Mahometan system, resting confessedly upon the Koran. The very meaning, therefore, of styling these systems, by way of honourable distinction, *religions of the book*, is, not that accidentally they had written vouchers for their creed, whereas the others had only oral vouchers, but that they severally offer to men's acceptance a large body of philosophic truth, such as requires and presupposes a book. Whereas the various religions contradistinguished from these three—viz., the whole body of Pagan idolatries—are mere forms of adoration addressed to many different divinities; and the brief reason why they are essentially opposed to religions of the book is, not that they *have* not, but logically that they *cannot* have, books or documents, inasmuch as they have no truths to deliver. They do not profess to teach anything whatsoever. What they profess, as their justifying distinction, is, to adore a certain deity, or a certain collective Pantheon, according to certain old authorized forms—authorized, that is to say, by fixed, ancient, and oftentimes local traditions.

What was the great practical inference from the new distinction which I offered? It was this: that Christianity (which included Judaism as its own germinal principle, and Islamism as its own adaptation to a barbarous and imperfect civilisation) carried along with itself its own authentication; since, whilst other religions introduced men simply to ceremonies and usages, which could furnish no aliment or material for their intellect, Christianity provided an eternal *palæstra* or place of exercise for the human understanding vitalized by human affections: for every problem whatever, interesting to the human intellect, provided only that it bears a *moral* aspect, immediately passes into the field of religious speculation. Religion had thus become the great organ of human culture. Lady Carbery advanced half-way to meet me in these new views, finding my credentials as a theologian in my earnestness and my sincerity. She herself was pain-

fully and sorrowfully in earnest. She had come, at this early age of seven or eight and twenty, to the most bitter sense of hollowness, and (in a philosophic sense) of *treachery* as underlying all things that stood round her; and she sought escape, if escape there were, through religion. Religion was to be sought in the Bible. But was the Bible intelligible at the first glance? Far from it. Search the Scriptures, was the cry in Protestant lands amongst all people, however much at war with each other. But I often told her that this was a vain pretence without some knowledge of Greek. Or perhaps not always and absolutely a pretence; because, undoubtedly, it is true that oftentimes mere ignorant simplicity may, by bringing into direct collision passages that are reciprocally illustrative, restrain an error or illuminate a truth. And a reason, which I have since given in print (a reason additional to Bentley's), for neglecting the 30,000 various readings collected by the diligence of the New Testament collators, applied also to this case—viz., that, first, the transcendent nature, and, secondly, the *recurrent* nature, of scriptural truths cause them to surmount verbal disturbances. A doctrine, for instance, which is sowed broadcast over the Scriptures, and recurs, on an average, three times in every chapter, cannot be affected by the casual inaccuracy of a phrase, since the phrase is continually varied. And, therefore, I would not deny the possibility of an effectual searching by very unlearned persons. Our authorized translators of the Bible in the Shaksperian age were not in any exquisite sense learned men; they were very able men, and in a better sense able than if they had been philologically profound scholars, which at that time, from the imperfect culture of philology, they could not easily have been; men they were whom religious feeling guided correctly in choosing their expressions, and with whom the state of the language in some respects cooperated, by furnishing a diction more homely, fervent, and pathetic, than would now be available. For *their* apostolic functions, English was the language most in demand. But in polemic or controversial cases Greek is indispensable. And of this Lady Carbery was sufficiently convinced by my own demur on the word *metanoia*. If I were right, how profoundly wrong must those have been whom my new explanations

superseded. She resolved, therefore, immediately on my suggesting it, that she would learn Greek ; or, at least, that limited form of Greek which was required for the New Testament. In the language of Terence, *dictum factum*—no sooner said than done. On the very next morning we all rode in to Stamford, our nearest town for such a purpose, and astounded the bookseller's apprentice by ordering four copies of the Clarendon Press Greek Testament, three copies of Parkhurst's Greek and English Lexicon, and three copies of some grammar, but *what* I have now forgotten. The books were to come down by the mail-coach without delay. Consequently, we were soon at work. Lady Massey and my sister, not being sustained by the same interest as Lady Carbery, eventually relaxed in their attention. But Lady Carbery was quite in earnest, and very soon became expert in the original language of the New Testament.

I wished much that she should have gone on to the study of Herodotus. And I described to her the situation of the vivacious and mercurial Athenian, in the early period of Pericles, as repeating in its main features, for the great advantage of that Grecian Froissart, the situation of Adam during his earliest hours in Paradise, himself being the describer to the affable archangel. The same genial climate there was ; the same luxuriation of nature in her early prime ; the same ignorance of his own origin in the tenant of this lovely scenery ; and the same eager desire to learn it.[1] The very truth, and mere facts of history, reaching Herodotus through

[1] "About me round I saw
Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,
And liquid lapse of murmuring streams ; by these
Creatures that lived and moved, and walk'd or flew ;
Birds on the branches warbling ; all things smiled ;
With fragrance, and with joy my heart o'erflow'd.
Myself I then perused, and limb by limb
Survey'd, and sometimes went, and sometimes ran
With supple joints, as lively vigour led ;
But who I was or where, or from what cause,
Knew not."—*Paradise Lost*, Book viii.

The *who*, the *where* (in any extended sense, *i.e.*, as regarded the *external* relations of his own country), and the *from what cause*—all these were precisely what the Grecian did not know, and first learned from Herodotus.

such a haze of remote abstraction, and suffering a sort of refraction at each translation from atmosphere to atmosphere, whilst continually the uninteresting parts dropped away as the whole moved onwards, unavoidably assumed the attractions of romance. And thus it has happened, that the air of marvellousness, which seems connected with the choice and preferences of Herodotus, is in reality the natural gift of his position. Culling from a field of many nations and many generations, reasonably he preferred such narratives as, though possible enough, wore the colouring of romance. Without any violation of the truth, the mere extent of his field as to space and time gave him great advantages for the wild and the marvellous. Meantime this purpose of ours with regard to Herodotus was defeated. Whilst we were making preparations for it, suddenly one morning from his Limerick estate of Carass returned Lord Carbery. And, by accident, his welcome was a rough one ; for, happening to find Lady Carbery in the breakfast-room, and naturally throwing his arm about her neck to kiss her, "Ruffian," a monster of a Newfoundland dog, singularly beautiful in his colouring, and almost as powerful as a leopard, flew at him vindictively as at a stranger committing an assault, and his mistress had great difficulty in calling him off. Lord Carbery smiled a little at our Greek studies ; and, in turn, made *us* smile, who knew the original object of these studies, when he suggested mildly that three or four books of the "Iliad" would have been as easily mastered, and might have more fully rewarded our trouble. I contented myself with replying (for I knew how little Lady Carbery would have liked to plead the *religious* motive to her husband) that Parkhurst (and there was at that time no other Greek-*English* Lexicon) would not have been available for Homer; neither, it is true, would he have been more available for Herodotus. But, considering the simplicity and uniformity of style in both these authors, I had formed a plan (not very hard of execution) for interleaving Parkhurst with such additional words as might have been easily mustered from the special dictionaries (Græco-Latin) dedicated separately to the service of the historian and of the poet. I do not believe that more than 1500 *extra* words would have been required ; and these,

entered at the rate of twenty per hour, would have occupied only ten days, for seven and a half hours each. However, from one cause or other, this plan was never brought to bear. The preliminary labour upon the lexicon always enforced a delay; and any delay, in such case, makes an opening for the irruption of a thousand unforeseen hindrances, that finally cause the whole plan to droop insensibly. The time came at last for leaving Laxton, and I did not see Lady Carbery again for nearly an entire year.

In passing through the park-gates of Laxton, on my departure northward, powerfully, and as if "with the might of waters," my mind turned round to contemplate that strange enlargement of my experience which had happened to me within the last three months. I had seen, and become familiarly acquainted with, a young man, who had in a manner died to every object around him, had died an intellectual death, and suddenly had been called back to life and real happiness—had been, in effect, raised from the dead —by the accident of meeting a congenial female companion. But, secondly, that very lady from whose lips I first heard this remarkable case of blight and restoration, had herself passed through an equal though not a similar blight, and was now seeking earnestly, though with what success I could never estimate, some similar restoration to some new mode of hopeful existence, through intercourse with religious philosophy. What vast revolutions (vast for the individual) within how narrow a circle! What blindness to approaching catastrophes, in the midst of what nearness to the light! And for myself, whom accident had made the silent observer of these changes, was it not likely enough that I also was rushing forward to court and woo some frantic mode of evading an endurance that by patience might have been borne, or by thoughtfulness might have been disarmed? Misgivingly I went forwards, feeling for ever that, through clouds of thick darkness, I was continually nearing a danger, or was myself perhaps wilfully provoking a trial, before which my constitutional despondency would cause me to lie down without a struggle.

CHAPTER XVI

AT MANCHESTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL[1]

To teach is to learn: according to an old experience, it is the very best mode of learning—the surest, and the shortest. And hence, perhaps, it may be, that in the middle ages by the monkish word *scholaris* was meant indifferently he that learned and he that taught. Never in any equal number of months had my understanding so much expanded as during this visit to Laxton. The incessant demand made upon me by Lady Carbery for solutions of the many difficulties besetting the study of divinity and the Greek Testament, or for such approximations to solutions as my resources would furnish, forced me into a preternatural tension of all the faculties applicable to that purpose. Lady Carbery insisted upon calling me her "Admirable Crichton"; and it was in

[1] To the long chapter of recollections of Laxton there succeeds, in the autobiographical volume in De Quincey's own collective edition, a chapter of nearly equal length entitled "The Priory," for which there is no original in *Tait's Magazine*, so that one supposes it to have been written about 1853. The name was suggested by the fact that the residence of De Quincey's mother at the time of his return from Ireland and visit to Laxton was at Chester, in a house known as St. John's Priory. As, in fact, however, about half of the chapter has nothing to do with this Priory, but concerns the year and a half of De Quincey's youth, from 1800 to 1802, during which he was boarded in Manchester Grammar School, I have ventured to divide the chapter into two, entitling this portion of it "At Manchester Grammar School," and reserving the title "The Priory" for the next portion. One is almost obliged to this by the recollection of the special importance of the Manchester Grammar School experience in De Quincey's life. It was the very crisis in his youthful life, and deserves mark as such.—M.

vain that I demurred to this honorary title upon two grounds : first, as being one towards which I had no natural aptitudes or predisposing advantages ; secondly (which made her stare), as carrying with it no real or enviable distinction. The splendour supposed to be connected with the attainments of Crichton I protested against as altogether imaginary. How far that person really had the accomplishments ascribed to him, I waived as a question not worth investigating. My objection commenced at an earlier point : real or not real, the accomplishments were, as I insisted, vulgar and trivial. Vulgar, that is, when put forward as exponents or adequate expressions of intellectual grandeur. The whole rested on a misconception; the limitary idea of knowledge was confounded with the infinite idea of power. To have a quickness in copying or mimicking other men, and in learning to do dexterously what *they* did clumsily, ostentatiously to keep glittering before men's eyes a thaumaturgic versatility, such as that of a rope-dancer or of an Indian juggler, in petty accomplishments, was a mode of the very vulgarest ambition : one effort of productive power, a little book, for instance, which should impress or should agitate several successive generations of men, even though far below the higher efforts of human creative art — as, for example, the "De Imitatione Christi," or the "Pilgrim's Progress," or "Robinson Crusoe," or "The Vicar of Wakefield"—was worth any conceivable amount of attainments when rated as an evidence of anything that could justly denominate a man "admirable." One felicitous ballad of forty lines might have enthroned Crichton as really admirable, whilst the pretensions actually put forward on his behalf simply instal him as a cleverish or dexterous ape. However, as Lady Carbery did not forego her purpose of causing me to shine under every angle, it would have been ungrateful in me to refuse my co-operation with her plans, however little they might wear a face of promise. Accordingly I surrendered myself for two hours daily to the lessons in horsemanship of a principal groom who ranked as a first-rate rough-rider ; and I gathered manifold experiences amongst the horses—so different from the wild, hard-mouthed horses at Westport, that were often vicious, and sometimes trained to vice. Here, though spirited, the horses

were pretty generally gentle, and all had been regularly broke. My education was not entirely neglected even as regarded sportsmanship, that great branch of philosophy being confided to one of the keepers, who was very attentive to me, in deference to the interest in myself expressed by his idolized mistress, but otherwise regarded me probably as an object of mysterious curiosity rather than of a sublunary hope.

Equally, in fact, as regarded my physics and my metaphysics,—in short, upon all lines of advance that interested my ambition,—I was going rapidly ahead. And, speaking seriously, in what regarded my intellectual expansion, never before or since had I been so distinctly made aware of it. No longer did it seem to move upon the hour-hand, whose advance, though certain, is yet a pure matter of inference, but upon the seconds-hand, which *visibly* comes on at a trotting pace. Everything prospered, except my own present happiness, and the possibility of any happiness for some years to come. About two months after leaving Laxton, my fate in the worst shape I had anticipated was solemnly and definitively settled. My guardians agreed that the most prudent course, with a view to my pecuniary interests, was to place me at the Manchester Grammar School; not with a view to further improvement in my classical knowledge, though the head-master was a sound scholar, but simply with a view to one of the school *exhibitions*.[1] Amongst the countless

[1] "*Exhibitions*":—This is the technical name in many cases, corresponding to the *bursæ* or *bursaries* of the Continent; from which word bursæ is derived, I believe, the German term *Bursch;* that is, a bursarius, or student who lives at college upon the salary allowed by such a bursary. Some years ago the editor of a Glasgow daily paper called upon Oxford and Cambridge, with a patronizing flourish, to imitate some one or more of the Scottish universities, in founding such systems of aliment for poor students otherwise excluded from academic advantages. Evidently he was unaware that they had existed for centuries before the state of civilisation in Scotland had allowed any opening for the foundation of colleges or academic life. Scottish bursaries, or exhibitions (a term which Shakspere uses, very near the close of the first act in the "Two Gentlemen of Verona," as the technical expression in England), were few, and not generally, I believe, exceeding £10 a year. The English were many and of more ancient standing, and running from £40 to £100 a year. Such was the simple difference between the two countries; otherwise they agreed altogether.

establishments, scattered all over England by the noble munificence of Englishmen and Englishwomen in past generations, for connecting the provincial towns with the two royal universities of the land, this Manchester school was one: in addition to other great local advantages (viz., *inter alia*, a fine old library and an ecclesiastical foundation, which in this present generation has furnished the materials for a bishopric of Manchester, with its deanery and chapter), this noble foundation secured a number of exhibitions at Brasenose College, Oxford, to those pupils of the school who should study at Manchester for three consecutive years. The pecuniary amount of these exhibitions has since then increased considerably through the accumulation of funds which the commercial character of that great city had caused to be neglected. At that time I believe each exhibition yielded about forty guineas a year, and was legally tenable for seven successive years. Now, to me this would have offered a most seasonable advantage, had it been resorted to some two years earlier. My small patrimonial inheritance gave to me, as it did to each of my four brothers, exactly £150 a year; and to each of my sisters exactly £100 a year. The Manchester exhibition of forty guineas a year would have raised this income for seven years to a sum close upon £200 a year. But at present I was half-way on the road to the completion of my sixteenth year.[1] Commencing my period of pupilage from that time, I should not have finished it until I had travelled half-way through my nineteenth year. And the specific evil that already weighed upon me with a sickening oppression was the premature expansion of my mind, and, as a foremost consequence, intolerance of boyish society. I ought to have entered upon my *triennium* of schoolboy servitude at the age of thirteen. As things were, a delay with which I had nothing to do myself, this and the native character of my mind had thrown the whole arrangement awry. For the better half of the three years I endured it patiently. But it had at length begun to eat more cor-

[1] As De Quincey completed his sixteenth year on the 15th of August 1801, this sentence dates his entry into Manchester Grammar School at about the beginning of that year. He remained in it till July 1802.—M.

rosively into my peace of mind than ever I had anticipated. The head-master was substantially superannuated for the duties of his place.[1] Not that intellectually he showed any symptoms of decay; but in the spirits and physical energies requisite for his duties he *did;* not so much age, as disease, it was that incapacitated him. In the course of a long day, beginning at seven A.M. and stretching down to five P.M., he succeeded in reaching the farther end of his duties. But how? Simply by consolidating pretty nearly into one continuous scene of labour the entire ten hours. The full hour of relaxation which the traditions of this ancient school and the bye-laws had consecrated to breakfast, was narrowed into ten or even seven minutes. The two hours' interval, in like manner prescribed by the old usages from twelve to two P.M., was pared down to forty minutes, or less. In this way he walked conscientiously through the services of the day, fulfilling to the letter every section the minutest of the traditional rubric. But he purchased this consummation at the price of all comfort to himself; and, having done *that*, he felt himself the more entitled to neglect the comfort of others. The case was singular: he neither showed any indulgence to himself more than to others (which, however, could do nothing towards indemnifying others for the severe confinement which his physical decay inflicted upon them—a point wholly forgotten by him); nor, secondly, in thus tenaciously holding on to his place, did he (I am satisfied) govern himself by any mercenary thought or wish, but simply by an austere sense of duty. He discharged his public functions with constant fidelity and with superfluity of learning; and felt, perhaps not unreasonably, that possibly the same learning united with the same zeal might not revolve as a matter of course in the event of his resigning the place. I hide from myself no part of the honourable motives which might (and probably *did*) exclusively govern him in adhering to the place. But not by one atom the less did the grievous results of his inability to grapple with his duties weigh upon all within his

[1] He was a Mr. Lawson; and, though De Quincey proceeds to give some sketch of him and his school management here, the reader must go for a fuller account to the *Confessions of an Opium-Eater.*—M.

sphere, and upon myself, by cutting up the time available for exercise, most ruinously.[1]

Precisely at the worst crisis of this intolerable darkness (for such, without exaggeration, it was in its effects upon my spirits) arose, and for five or six months steadily continued, a consolation of that nature which hardly in dreams I could have anticipated. For even in dreams would it have seemed reasonable or natural that Laxton, with its entire society, should transfer itself to Manchester? Some mighty Caliph, or lamp-bearing Aladdin, might have worked such marvels; but else who, or by what machinery? Nevertheless, without either Caliph or Aladdin, and by the most natural of mere human agencies, this change was suddenly accomplished.

Mr. White, whom I have already had occasion to mention (p. 35 of this vol.) was in those days the most eminent surgeon by much in the North of England. He had by one whole generation run before the phrenologists and craniologists —having already measured innumerable skulls amongst the omnigenous seafaring population of Liverpool, illustrating all the races of men; and was in society a most urbane and pleasant companion. On my mother's suggestion, he had been summoned to Laxton, in the hope that he might mitigate the torments of Mrs. Schreiber's malady. If I am right in supposing *that* to have been cancer, I presume that he could not have added much to the prescriptions of the local doctor. And yet, on the other hand, it is a fact—so slowly did new views travel in those days, when scientific journals were few, and roads were heavy—that ten years later than this period I knew a case—viz., the case of a butcher's wife in Somersetshire—who had never enjoyed the benefit of hemlock in relieving the pangs of a cancerous complaint, until an accident brought Mr. Hey, son to the celebrated Hey of Leeds, into the poor woman's neighbourhood.

What might be the quality or the extent of that relief with

[1] How miserable De Quincey was at Manchester Grammar School appears from a letter he wrote to his mother pleading for his removal from it after he had been there more than a year. "I ask whether a person can be happy, or even simply easy," he said, "who is in a situation which deprives him of *health*, of *society*, of *amusement*, of *liberty*, of *congeniality of pursuits*, and which, to complete the precious picture, admits of no variety."—M.

which Mr. White was able to crown the expectations of poor Mrs. Schreiber, I do not know; but that the relief could not have been imaginary is certain, for he was earnestly invited to repeat his visits, costly as unavoidably they were. Mrs. Schreiber did not reside at Laxton. Tenderly as she loved Lady Carbery, it did not seem consistent with her dignity that she should take a station that might have been grossly misinterpreted; and accordingly she bought or hired a miniature kind of villa, called *Tixover*, distant about four miles from Laxton. A residence in such a house, so sad and silent at this period of affliction for its mistress, would have offered too cheerless a life to Mr. White. He took up his abode, therefore, at Laxton during his earliest visit; and this happened to coincide with that particular visit of my own during which I was initiating Lady Carbery into the mysteries of New Testament Greek. Already as an infant I had known Mr. White; but now, when daily riding over to Tixover in company, and daily meeting at breakfast and dinner, we became intimate. Greatly I profited by this intimacy; and some part of my pleasure in the Laxton plan of migration to Manchester was drawn from the prospect of renewing it. Such a migration was suggested by Mr. White himself; and fortunately he *could* suggest it without even the appearance of any mercenary views. His interest lay the other way. The large special retainer, which it was felt but reasonable to pay him under circumstances so peculiar, naturally disturbed Mr. White; whilst the benefits of visits so discontinuous became more and more doubtful. He proposed it, therefore, as a measure of prudence, that Mrs. Schreiber should take up her abode in Manchester. This counsel was adopted; and the entire Laxton party in one week struck their Northamptonshire tents, dived as it were into momentary darkness by a loitering journey of stages, short and few, out of consideration for the invalid, and rose again in the gloomy streets of Manchester.

Gloomy they were at that time—mud below, smoke above—for no torch of improvement had yet explored the ancient habitations of this Lancashire capital. Elsewhere I have expressed the inexhaustible admiration which I cherish for the *moral* qualities, the unrivalled energy and

perseverance, of that native Lancashire population, as yet not much alloyed with Celtic adulteration. My feelings towards them are the same as were eloquently and impressively avowed by the late eminent Dr. Cooke Taylor, after an *official* inquiry into their situation. But in those days the Manchester people realized the aspiration of the noble Scythian ; not the place it was that glorified *them*, but they that glorified the place. No great city (which technically it then was not, but simply a town or large village) could present so repulsive an exterior as the Manchester of that day. Lodgings of *any* sort could with difficulty be obtained, and at last only by breaking up the party. The poor suffering lady, with her two friends, Lady Carbery and my mother, hired one house, Lord and Lady Massey another, and two others were occupied by attendants—all the servants, except one lady's-maid, being every night separated by a quarter of a mile from their mistresses. To me, however, all these discomforts were scarcely apparent, in the prodigious revolution for the better which was now impressed upon the tenor of my daily life. I lived in the house of the head-master ; but every night I had leave to adjourn for four or five hours to the drawing-room of Lady Carbery. Her anxiety about Mrs. Schreiber would not allow of her going abroad into society, unless upon the rarest occasions. And I, on my part, was too happy in her conversation—so bold, so novel, and so earnest—voluntarily to have missed any one hour of it.

Here, by the way, let me mention that on this occasion arose a case of pretended "*tuft-hunting*," which I, who stood by a silent observer, could not but feel to involve a malicious calumny. Naturally it happened that coroneted carriages, superb horses, and numerous servants, in a town so unostentatious and homely as the Manchester of that day, drew the public gaze, and effectually advertised the visit of the Laxton ladies. Respect for the motive which had prompted this visit co-operated with admiration for the distinguished personal qualities of Lady Carbery, to draw upon her from several leading families in the town such little services and attentions as pass naturally under a spontaneous law of courtesy between those who are at home

and those who suffer under the disadvantages of *strangership*. The Manchester people, who made friendly advances to Lady Carbery, did so, I am persuaded, with no ulterior objects whatsoever of pressing into the circle of an aristocratic person; neither did Lady Carbery herself interpret their attentions in any such ungenerous spirit, but accepted them cordially, as those expressions of disinterested goodness which I am persuaded that in reality they were. Amongst the families that were thus attentive to her, in throwing open for her use various local advantages of baths, libraries, picture-galleries, &c., were the wife and daughters of Mr. White himself. Now, one of these daughters was herself the wife of a baronet, Sir Richard Clayton, who had honourably distinguished himself in literature by translating and *improving* the work of Tenhove the Dutchman (or Belgian?) upon the House of the *De' Medici*—a work which Mr. Roscoe considered "the most engaging work that has perhaps ever appeared on a subject of literary history." Introduced as Lady Clayton had been amongst the *élite* of our aristocracy, it could not be supposed that she would be at all solicitous about an introduction to the wife of an Irish nobleman, simply *as* such, and apart from her personal endowments. Those endowments, it is true—viz., the beauty and the talents of Lady Carbery, made known in Manchester through Mr. White's report of them, and combined with the knowledge of her generous devotion to her dying friend, secluding her steadily from all society through a period of very many months—did, and reasonably might, interest many Manchester people on her behalf. In all this there was nothing to be ashamed of; and, judging from what personally I witnessed, this seems to have been the true nature and extent of the "tuft-hunting"; and I have noticed it at all simply because there is a habit almost national growing up amongst us of imputing to each other some mode of unmanly prostration before the aristocracy, but with as little foundation for the charge generally, I believe, as I am satisfied there was in this particular instance.

Mr. White possessed a museum—formed chiefly by himself, and originally, perhaps, directed simply to professional objects, such as would have little chance for engaging the

attention of females. But surgeons and speculative physicians, beyond all other classes of intellectual men, cultivate the most enlarged and liberal curiosity; so that Mr. White's museum furnished attractions to an unusually large variety of tastes. I had myself already seen it; and it struck me that Mr. White would be gratified if Lady Carbery would herself ask to see it; which accordingly she did; and thus at once removed the painful feeling that he might be extorting from her an expression of interest in his collection which she did not really feel.

Amongst the objects which gave a scientific interest to the collection, naturally I have forgotten one and all—first, midst, and last; for this is one of the cases in which we all felicitate ourselves upon the art and gift of forgetting; that art which the great Athenian[1] noticed as amongst the *desiderata* of human life—that gift which, if in some rare cases it belongs only to the regal prerogatives of the grave, fortunately in many thousands of other cases is accorded by the treachery of a human brain. Heavens! what a curse it were, if every chaos, which is stamped upon the mind by fairs such as that London fair of St. Bartholomew in years long past, or by the records of battles and skirmishes through the monotonous pages of history, or by the catalogues of libraries stretching over a dozen measured miles, could not be erased, but arrayed itself in endless files incapable of obliteration, as often as the eyes of our human memory happened to throw back their gaze in that direction! Heaven be praised, I have forgotten everything; all the earthly trophies of skill or curious research; even the aërolithes, that might possibly *not* be earthly, but presents from some superior planet. Nothing survives, except the *humanities* of the collection; and amongst these, two only I will molest the reader by noticing. One of the two was a *mummy;* the other was a *skeleton.* I, that had previously seen the museum, warned Lady Carbery of both; but much it mortified us, that only the skeleton was shown. Perhaps the mummy was too closely connected with the personal history of Mr. White for exhibition to strangers! it was that of a lady who had been attended medically for some

[1] "*The great Athenian*":—Themistocles.

years by Mr. White, and had owed much alleviation of her sufferings to his inventive skill. She had therefore felt herself called upon to memorialize her gratitude by a very large bequest, not less (I have heard) than £25,000 ; but with this condition annexed to the gift—that she should be embalmed as perfectly as the resources in that art of London and Paris could accomplish, and that once a year Mr. White, accompanied by two witnesses of credit, should withdraw the veil from her face. The lady was placed in a common English clock-case, having the usual glass face : but a veil of white velvet obscured from all profane eyes the silent features behind. The clock I had myself seen, when a child, and had gazed upon it with inexpressible awe. But naturally, on my report of the case, the whole of our party were devoured by a curiosity to see the departed fair one. Had Mr. White, indeed, furnished us with the key of the museum, leaving us to our own discretion, but restricting us only (like a cruel Bluebeard) from looking into any anteroom, great is my fear that the perfidious question would have arisen amongst us—what o'clock it was ? and all possible anterooms would have given way to the just fury of our passions. I submitted to Lady Carbery, as a liberty which might be excused by the torrid extremity of our thirst after knowledge, that she (as our leader) should throw out some angling question moving in the line of our desires ; upon which hint Mr. White, if he had any touch of indulgence to human infirmity—unless Mount Caucasus were his mother, and a she-wolf his nurse —would surely relent, and act as his conscience must suggest. But Lady Carbery reminded me of the three Calendars in the "Arabian Nights," and argued that, as the ladies of Bagdad were justified in calling upon a body of porters to kick those gentlemen into the street, being people who had abused the indulgences of hospitality, much more might Mr. White do so with us ; for the Calendars were the children of kings (Shahzades), which we were not ; and had found their curiosity far more furiously irritated : in fact, Zobeide had no right to trifle with any man's curiosity in that ferocious extent ; and a counter-right arose, as any chancery of human nature would have ruled, to demand a

solution of what had been so maliciously arranged towards an anguish of insupportable temptation. Thus, however, it happened that the mummy, who left such valuable legacies, and founded such bilious fevers of curiosity, was not seen by us; nor even the miserable clock-case.

The mummy, therefore, was not seen; but the skeleton *was*. Who was he? It is not every day that one makes the acquaintance of a skeleton; and with regard to such a thing—thing, shall one say, or person?—there is a favourable presumption from beforehand; which is this:—As he is of no use, neither profitable nor ornamental, to any person whatever, absolutely *de trop* in good society, what but distinguished merit of some kind or other could induce any man to interfere with that gravitating tendency that by an eternal *nisus* is pulling him below ground? Lodgings are dear in England. True it is that, according to the vile usage on the Continent, one room serves a skeleton for bedroom and sitting-room; neither is his expense heavy, as regards wax-lights, fire, or "bif-steck." But still, even a skeleton is chargeable; and, if any dispute should arise about his maintenance, the parish will do nothing. Mr. White's skeleton, therefore, being costly, was presumably meritorious, before we had seen him or heard a word in his behalf. It was, in fact, the skeleton of an eminent robber, or perhaps of a murderer. But I, for my part, reserved a faint right of suspense. And, as to the profession of robber in those days exercised on the roads of England, it was a liberal profession, which required more accomplishments than either the bar or the pulpit; from the beginning it presumed a most bountiful endowment of heroic qualifications—strength, health, agility, and exquisite horsemanship, intrepidity of the first order, presence of mind, courtesy, and a general ambidexterity of powers for facing all accidents, and for turning to a good account all unlooked-for contingencies. The finest men in England, physically speaking, throughout the eighteenth century, the very noblest specimens of man, considered as an animal, were beyond a doubt the mounted robbers who cultivated their profession on the great leading roads—viz., on the road from London to York (technically known as "the Great North Road"); on the road west to

Bath, and thence to Exeter and Plymouth ; north-westwards from London to Oxford, and thence to Chester ; eastwards to Tunbridge ; southwards by east to Dover ; then inclining westwards to Portsmouth ; more so still, through Salisbury to Dorsetshire and Wilts. These great roads were farmed out as so many Roman provinces amongst proconsuls. Yes, but with a difference, you will say, in respect of moral principles. Certainly with a difference : for the English highwayman had a sort of conscience for gala-days, which could not often be said of the Roman governor or procurator. At this moment we see that the opening for the forger of bank-notes is brilliant ; but practically it languishes, as being too brilliant : it demands an array of talent for engraving, &c., which, wherever it exists, is sufficient to carry a man forward upon principles reputed honourable. Why then should *he* court danger and disreputability ? But in that century the special talents which led to distinction upon the high road had oftentimes no career open to them elsewhere. The mounted robber on the highways of England, in an age when all gentlemen travelled with firearms, lived in an element of danger and adventurous gallantry ; which, even from those who could least allow him any portion of their esteem, extorted sometimes a good deal of their unwilling admiration. By the necessities of the case, he brought into his perilous profession some brilliant qualities—intrepidity, address, promptitude of decision ; and if to these he added courtesy, and a spirit (native or adopted) of forbearing generosity, he seemed almost a man that merited public encouragement : since very plausibly it might be argued that his profession was sure to exist; that, if he were removed, a successor would inevitably arise, and that successor might or might *not* carry the same liberal and humanizing temper into his practice. The man whose skeleton was now before us had ranked amongst the most chivalrous of his order, and was regarded by some people as vindicating the national honour in a point where not very long before it had suffered a transient eclipse. In the preceding generation, it had been felt as throwing a shade of disgrace over the public honour, that the championship of England upon the high road fell for a time into French

hands: upon French prowess rested the burden of English honour, or, in Gallic phrase, of English *glory*. Claude Duval, a Frenchman of undeniable courage, handsome, and noted for his chivalrous devotion to women, had been honoured, on his condemnation to the gallows, by the tears of many ladies who attended his trial, and by their sympathizing visits during his imprisonment. But the robber represented by the skeleton in Mr. White's museum (whom let us call X, since his true name has perished), added to the same heroic qualities a person far more superb. Still it was a dreadful drawback from his pretensions, if he had really practised as a murderer. Upon what ground did that suspicion arise? In candour (for candour is due even to a skeleton) it ought to be mentioned that the charge, if it amounted to so much, arose with a lady from some part of Cheshire—the district of Knutsford, I believe;—but, wherever it was, in the same district, during the latter part of his career, had resided our X. At first he was not suspected even as a robber—as yet not so much as suspected of being suspicious: in a simple rustic neighbourhood, amongst good-natured peasants, for a long time he was regarded with simple curiosity, rather than suspicion; and even the curiosity pointed to his horse more than to himself. The robber had made himself popular amongst the kind-hearted rustics by his general courtesy. Courtesy and the spirit of neighbourliness go a great way amongst country people; and the worst construction of the case was, that he might be an embarrassed gentleman from Manchester or Liverpool, hiding himself from his creditors, who are notoriously a very immoral class of people. At length, however, a violent suspicion broke loose against him; for it was ascertained that on certain nights, when perhaps he had *extra* motives for concealing the fact of having been abroad, he drew woollen stockings over his horse's feet, with the purpose of deadening the sound in riding up a brick-paved entry, common to his own stable and that of a respectable neighbour. Thus far there was a reasonable foundation laid for suspicion: but suspicion of what? Because a man attends to the darning of his horse's stockings, why must he be meditating murder? The fact is—and known from the

very first to a select party of amateurs—that X, our superb-looking skeleton, *did*, about three o'clock on a rainy Wednesday morning, in the dead of winter, ride silently out of Knutsford ; and about forty-eight hours afterwards, on a rainy Friday, silently and softly did that same superb blood-horse, carrying that same blood-man—viz., our friend the superb skeleton—pace up the quiet brick entry, in a neat pair of socks, on his return.

During that interval of forty-eight hours, an atrocious murder was committed in the ancient city of Bristol. By whom? That question is to this day unanswered. The scene of it was a house on the west side of the College Green ; which is in fact that same quadrangle, planted with trees, and having on its southern side the Bristol Cathedral, up and down which, early in the reign of George III, Chatterton walked in jubilant spirits with fair young women of Bristol ; up and down which, some thirty years later, Robert Southey and S. T. C. walked with young Bristol belles from a later generation. The subjects of the murder were an elderly lady, bearing some such name as Rusborough, and her female servant. Mystery there was none as to the motive of the murder—manifestly it was a hoard of money that had attracted the assassin : but there was great perplexity as to the agent or agents concerned in the atrocious act, and as to the mode by which an entrance, under the known precautions of the lady, could have been effected. Because a thoroughbred horse could easily have accomplished the distance to and fro (say 300 miles) within the forty-eight hours, and because the two extreme dates of this forty-eight hours' absence tallied with the requisitions of the Bristol tragedy, it did not follow that X must have had a hand in it. And yet, had these coincidences *then* been observed, they would certainly—now that strong suspicions had been directed to the man from the extraordinary character of his nocturnal precautions—not have passed without investigation. But the remoteness of Bristol, and the rarity of newspapers in those days, caused these indications to pass unnoticed. Bristol knew of no such Knutsford highwayman ; Knutsford knew of no such Bristol murder. It is singular enough that these earlier grounds of suspicion against X were

not viewed as such by anybody, until they came to be combined with another and final ground. Then the presumptions seemed conclusive. But by that time X himself had been executed for a robbery, had been manufactured into a skeleton by the famous surgeon, Cruickshank,[1] assisted by Mr. White and other pupils. All interest in the case had subsided in Knutsford that could now have cleared up the case satisfactorily: and thus it happened that to this day the riddle, which was read pretty decisively in a northern county, still remains a riddle in the south. When I saw the College Green house in 1809-10, it was apparently empty, and, as I was told, had always been empty since the murder: forty years had not cicatrized the bloody remembrance; and, to this day, perhaps, it remains amongst the gloomy traditions of Bristol.

But whether the Bristol house has or has not shaken off that odour of blood which offended the nostrils of tenants, it is, I believe, certain that the city annals have not shaken off the mystery: which yet to certain people in Knutsford, as I have said, and to us the spectators of the skeleton, immediately upon hearing one damning fact from the lips of Mr. White, seemed to melt away and evaporate as convincingly as if we had heard the explanation issuing in the terms of a confession from the mouth of the skeleton itself. What, then, *was* the fact? With pain, and reluctantly, we felt its force, as we looked at the royal skeleton, and reflected on the many evidences which he had given of courage, and perhaps of other noble qualities. The ugly fact was this:—In a few weeks after the College Green tragedy, Knutsford, and the whole neighbourhood as far as Warrington (the half-way town between Liverpool and Manchester), were deluged with gold and silver coins, moidores and dollars, from the Spanish mint of Mexico, &c. These, during the frequent scarcities of English silver currency, were notoriously current in England. Now, it is an unhappy fact, and subsequently became known to the Bristol and London police, that a considerable part of poor Mrs. Rusborough's treasure lay in such coins, gold and silver, from the Spanish colonial mints.

Lady Carbery at this period made an effort to teach me

[1] William Cruickshank, anatomist, born 1746, died 1800.—M.

Hebrew, by way of repaying in *kind* my pains in teaching Greek to *her*. Where, and upon what motive, she had herself begun to learn Hebrew, I forget: but in Manchester she had resumed this study with energy on a casual impulse derived from a certain Dr. Bailey, a clergyman of this city who had published a Hebrew Grammar. The doctor was the most unworldly and guileless of men. Amongst his orthodox brethren he was reputed a "Methodist"; and not without reason; for some of his Low-Church views he pushed into practical extravagances that looked like fanaticism, or even like insanity. Lady Carbery wished naturally to testify her gratitude for his services by various splendid presents: but nothing would the good doctor accept, unless it assumed a shape that might be available for the service of the paupers amongst his congregation. The Hebrew studies, however, notwithstanding the personal assistance which we drew from the kindness of Dr. Bailey, languished. For this there were several reasons; but it was enough that the systematic vagueness in the pronunciation of this, as of the other oriental languages, disgusted both of us. A word which could not be pronounced with any certainty was not in a true sense possessed. Let it be understood, however, that it was not the correct and original pronunciation that we cared for—*that* has perished probably beyond recall even in the case of Greek, in spite of the Asiatic and the Insular Greeks; what we demanded in vain was any pronunciation whatever that should be articulate, apprehensible, and intercommunicable, such as might differentiate the words: whereas a system of mere vowels too inadequately strengthened by consonants, seemed to leave all words pretty nearly alike. One day, in a pause of languor amongst these arid Hebrew studies, I read to her with a beating heart "The Ancient Mariner." It had been first published in 1798; and about this time (1801) was republished the first *two*-volume edition of "The Lyrical Ballads." Well I knew Lady Carbery's constitutional inaptitude for poetry; and not for the world would I have sought sympathy from her or from anybody else upon that part of the L. B. which belonged to Wordsworth. But I fancied that the wildness of this tale, and the triple majesties of Solitude, of Mist, and of the Ancient Unknown Sea,

might have won her into relenting ; and, in fact, she listened with gravity and deep attention. But, on reviewing afterwards in conversation such passages as she happened to remember, she laughed at the finest parts, and shocked me by calling the mariner himself "an old quiz" ; protesting that the latter part of his homily to the wedding-guest clearly pointed him out as the very man meant by Providence for a stipendiary curate to the good Dr. Bailey in his overcrowded church.[1] With an albatross perched on his shoulder, and who might be introduced to the congregation as the immediate organ of his conversion, and supported by the droning of a bassoon, she represented the mariner lecturing to advantage in English ; the doctor overhead in the pulpit enforcing it in Hebrew. Angry I was, though forced to laugh. But of what use is anger or argument in a duel with female criticism ? Our ponderous masculine wits are no match for the mercurial fancy of women. Once, however, I had a triumph : to my great surprise, one day, she suddenly repeated by heart, to Dr. Bailey, the beautiful passage :—

"It ceased, yet still the sails made on," &c.,

asking what he thought of *that ?* As it happened, the simple childlike doctor had more sensibility than herself ; for, though he had never in his whole homely life read more of poetry than he had drunk of Tokay or Constantia—in fact, had scarcely heard tell of any poetry but Watts's Hymns—he seemed petrified : and at last, with a deep sigh, as if recovering from the spasms of a new birth, said, " I never heard anything so beautiful in my whole life."

During the long stay of the Laxton party in Manchester occurred a Christmas ; and at Christmas—that is, at the approach of this great Christian festival—so properly substituted in England for the Pagan festival of January and the New Year, there was, according to ancient usage, on the breaking up for the holidays at the Grammar School, a solemn celebration of the season by public speeches. Among the six speakers, I, of course (as one of the three boys who composed the head class), held a distinguished place ; and it

[1] St. James's, according to my present recollection.

followed, also as a matter of course, that all my friends congregated on this occasion to do me honour. What I had to recite was a copy of Latin verses (Alcaics) on the recent conquest of Malta. *Melite Britannis Subacta*—this was the title of my worshipful nonsense. The whole strength of the Laxton party had mustered on this occasion. Lady Carbery made a point of bringing in her party every creature whom she could influence. And, probably, there were in that crowded audience many old Manchester friends of my father, loving his memory, and thinking to honour it by kindness to his son. Furious, at any rate, was the applause which greeted me: furious was my own disgust. Frantic were the clamours as I concluded my nonsense: frantic was my inner sense of shame at the childish exhibition to which, unavoidably, I was making myself a party. Lady Carbery had, at first, directed towards me occasional glances, expressing a comic sympathy with the thoughts which she supposed to be occupying my mind. But these glances ceased; and I was recalled, by the gloomy sadness in her altered countenance, to some sense of my own extravagant and disproportionate frenzy on this occasion: from the indulgent kindness with which she honoured me, her countenance on this occasion became a mirror to my own. At night she assured me, when talking over the case, that she had never witnessed an expression of such settled misery, and also (so she fancied) of misanthropy, as that which darkened my countenance in those moments of apparent public triumph, no matter how trivial the occasion, and amidst an uproar of friendly felicitation. I look back to that state of mind as almost a criminal reproach to myself, if it were not for the facts of the case. But, in excuse for myself, this fact, above all others, ought to be mentioned—that, over and above the killing oppression to my too sensitive system of the monotonous school tasks, and the ruinous want of exercise, I had fallen under medical advice the most misleading that it is possible to imagine. The physician and the surgeon of my family were men too eminent, it seemed to me, and, consequently, with time too notoriously bearing a high pecuniary value, for any schoolboy to detain them with complaints. Under these circum-

stances, I threw myself for aid, in a case so simple that any clever boy in a druggist's shop would have known how to treat it, upon the advice of an old, old apothecary, who had full authority from my guardian to run up a most furious account against me for medicine. This being the regular mode of payment, inevitably, and unconsciously, he was biassed to a mode of treatment—viz., by drastic medicines varied without end—which fearfully exasperated the complaint. This complaint, as I now know, was the simplest possible derangement of the liver, a torpor in its action that might have been put to rights in three days. In fact, one week's pedestrian travelling amongst the Caernarvonshire mountains effected a revolution in my health such as left me nothing to complain of.

An odd thing happened by the merest accident. I, when my Alcaics had run down their foolish larum, instead of resuming my official place as one of the trinity who composed the head class, took a seat by the side of Lady Carbery. On the other side of her was seated a stranger ; and this stranger, whom mere chance had thrown next to her, was Lord Belgrave, her old, and at one time (as some people fancied) favoured suitor. In this there was nothing at all extraordinary. Lord Grey de Wilton, an old *alumnus* of this Manchester Grammar School, and an *alumnus* during the early reign of this same *Archididascalus*, made a point of showing honour to his ancient tutor, especially now when reputed to be decaying ; and with the same view he brought Lord Belgrave, who had become his son-in-law after his rejection by Lady Carbery. The whole was a very natural accident. But Lady Carbery was not sufficiently bronzed by worldly habits to treat this accident with *nonchalance ;* she did not *to the public eye* betray any embarrassment ; but afterwards she told me that no incident could have been more distressing to her.

Some months after this, the Laxton party quitted Manchester, having no further motive for staying. Mrs. Schreiber was now confessedly dying ; medical skill could do no more for her ; and, this being so, there was no reason why she should continue to exchange her own quiet little Rutlandshire cottage for the discomforts of smoky lodgings. Lady

Carbery retired like some golden pageant amongst the clouds; thick darkness succeeded; the ancient torpor re-established itself; and my health grew distressingly worse. Then it was, after dreadful self-conflicts, that I took the unhappy resolution of which the results are recorded in the "Opium Confessions."[1] At this point, the reader must understand, comes in that chapter of my life; and, for all which concerns that delirious period, I refer him to those "Confessions." Some anxiety I had on leaving Manchester, lest my mother should suffer too much from this rash step; and on that impulse I altered the direction of my wanderings; not going (as I had originally planned) to the English Lakes, but making first of all for St. John's Priory, Chester, at that time my mother's residence. There I found my maternal uncle, Captain Penson, of the Bengal establishment, just recently come home on a two years' leave of absence; and there I had an interview with my mother. By a temporary arrangement I received a weekly allowance, which would have enabled me to live in *any* district of Wales, either North or South; for Wales, both North and South, is (or at any rate *was*) a land of exemplary cheapness. For instance, at Talyllyn, in Merionethshire, or anywhere off the line of tourists, I and a lieutenant in our English navy paid sixpence uniformly for a handsome dinner; sixpence, I mean, apiece. But two months later came a golden blockhead, who instructed the people that it was "sinful" to charge less than three shillings. In Wales, meantime, I suffered grievously from want of books; and, fancying, in my profound ignorance of the world, that I could borrow money upon my own expectations, or, at least, that I could do so with the joint security of Lord Westport (now Earl of Altamont, upon his father's elevation to the Marquisate of Sligo),[2] or (failing *that*) with the security of his amiable and friendly cousin, the Earl of Desart, I had the unpardonable folly to quit the deep tranquillities of North Wales, for the uproars, and

[1] The resolution of running away from the Manchester Grammar School; which he did one July morning in 1802.—M.

[2] The Earl of Altamont was created Marquis of Sligo 29th December 1800; from which date, accordingly, De Quincey's young friend, Lord Westport, had been by courtesy Earl of Altamont.—M.

perils, and the certain miseries of London. I had borrowed ten guineas from Lady Carbery; and at that time, when my purpose was known to nobody, I might have borrowed any sum I pleased. But I could never again avail myself of that resource, because I must have given some address, in order to insure the receipt of Lady Carbery's answer; and in that case, so sternly conscientious was she that, under the notion of saving me from ruin, my address would have been immediately communicated to my guardians, and by them would have been confided to the unrivalled detective talents, in those days, of Townsend, or some other Bow Street officer.[1]

[1] At this point the reader has to imagine that wonderful plunge of young De Quincey into London after his vagrancy in Wales, and those miseries of his months of skulking and semi-starvation in London, the story of which is told in the *Confessions*, and which carry him out of 1802 into 1803.—M.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PRIORY, CHESTER[1]

THAT episode, or impassioned parenthesis, in my life which is comprehended in "The Confessions of an Opium-Eater" had finished: suppose it over and gone, and once more, after the storms of London, suppose me resting from my dreadful remembrances in the deep monastic tranquillity of St. John's Priory; and just then, by accident, with no associates except my mother and my uncle. What was the Priory like? Was it young or old, handsome or plain? What was my uncle the captain like? Young or old, handsome or plain? Wait a little, my reader; give me time, and I will tell you all. My uncle's leave of absence from India had not expired; in fact, it had nine or ten months still to run; and this accident furnished us all with an opportunity of witnessing his preternatural activity. One morning early in April of the year 1803, a gentleman called at the Priory, and mentioned, as the news of the morning brought down by the London mail, that there had been a very hot and very sudden "press" along the Thames, and simultaneously at the outports. Indeed, before this, the spiteful tone of Sebastiani's Report, together with the arrogant comment in the

[1] See footnote, *ante*, p. 378. This concluding chapter of the volume has a special interest from the fact that it tells us more about De Quincey's mother than we have heard heretofore. As in the first chapter he sketched chiefly his father, the Manchester merchant, who died in 1793 at the age of forty, so in this concluding chapter he describes for us his mother as she had lived in various parts of England since then, and as she was in 1803, the tenth year of her widowhood.—M.

"Moniteur" on the supposed inability of Great Britain to contend "single-handed" with France, and, finally, the public brutality to our ambassador, had prepared us all for war. But, then, might not all this blow over? No: apart from any choice or preference of war on the part of Napoleon, his very existence depended upon war. He lived by and through the army. Without a succession of wars and martial glories in reserve for the army, what interest had they in Napoleon? This was obscurely acknowledged by everybody. More or less consciously perceived, a feeling deep and strong ran through the nation, that it was vain to seek expedients or delays; a mighty strife had to be fought out, which could not be evaded. Thence it was that the volunteer system was so rapidly and earnestly developed. As a first stage in the process of national enthusiasm, this was invaluable. The first impulse drew out the material. Next, as might have been foreseen, came an experience which taught us seasonably that these redundant materials, crude and miscellaneous, required a winnowing and sifting, which very soon we had; and the result was—an incomparable militia. Chester shone conspicuously in this noble competition. But here, as elsewhere, at first there was no cavalry. Upon that arose a knot of gentlemen, chiefly those who hunted, and in a very few hours laid the foundation of a small cavalry force. Three troops were raised in the *city* of Chester—one of the three being given to my uncle. The whole were under the command of Colonel Dod, who had a landed estate in the county, and who (like my uncle) had been in India. But Colonel Dod and the captains of the two other troops gave comparatively little aid. The whole working activities of the system rested with my uncle. Then first I saw energy; then first I knew what it meant. All the officers of the three troops exchanged dinner parties with each other; and consequently they dined at the Priory often enough to make us acquainted with their characteristic qualities. That period had not yet passed away, though it was already passing, when gentlemen did not willingly leave the dinner-table in a state of absolute sobriety. Colonel Dod and my uncle had learned in Bengal, under the coercion of the climate, habits of temperance. But the others (though few, perhaps, might be systematic

drinkers) were careless in this respect, and drank under social excitement quite enough to lay bare the ruling tendencies of their several characters. Being English, naturally the majority were energetic, and beyond all things despised dreaming *fainéans* (such, for instance, as we find the politicians, or even the conspirators, of Italy, Spain, and Germany, whose whole power of action evaporates in talking, and histrionically gesticulating). Yet still the best of them seemed inert by comparison with my uncle, and to regard *his* standard of action and exertion as trespassing to a needless degree upon ordinary human comfort.

Commonplace, meantime, my uncle was in the character of his intellect: there he fell a thousand leagues below my mother, to whom he looked up with affectionate astonishment. But, as a man of action, he ran so far ahead of men generally, that he ceased to impress one as commonplace. He, if any man ever did, realized the Roman poet's description of being *natus rebus agendis*—sent into this world not for talking, but for doing; not for counsel, but for execution. On that field he was a portentous man—a monster; and, viewing him as such, I am disposed to concede a few words to what modern slang denominates his "antecedents."

Two brothers and one sister—viz., my mother—composed the household choir of children gathering round the hearth of my maternal grandparents, whose name was Penson. My grandfather at one time held an office under the king; how named, I once heard, but have forgotten; only this I remember, that it was an office which conferred the title of *Esquire;* so that upon each and all of his several coffins—lead, oak, mahogany—he was entitled to proclaim himself an *Armiger;* which, observe, is the newest—oldest—most classic mode of saying that one is privileged to bear arms in a sense intelligible only to the Heralds' College. This *Armiger*, this undeniable Squire, was doubly distinguished: first, by his iron constitution and impregnable health; which were of such quality, and, like the sword of Michael, the warrior-angel ("Paradise Lost," B. vi.), had "from the armoury of God been given him tempered so," that no insurance-office, trafficking in life-annuities, would have ventured to look him in the face. People thought him good, like a cat, for eight

or nine generations; nor did any man perceive at what avenue death could find, or disease could force, a practicable breach; and yet, such anchorage have all human hopes, in the very midst of these windy anticipations, this same granite grandpapa of mine, not yet very far ahead of sixty—being, in fact, threescore years and none—suddenly struck his flag, and found himself, in his privileged character of *Armiger*, needing those door (coffin-door) plates which all reasonable people had supposed to be reserved for the manufacturing hands of some remote century. "*Armiger*, pack up your traps" — "Collige sarcinas" — "Squire, you're wanted": these dreadful citations were inevitable; come they must; but surely, as everybody thought, not in the eighteenth, or, perhaps, even the nineteenth century. *Diis aliter visum.* My grandfather, built for an *Æonian* duration, did not come within hail of myself; whilst his gentle partner, my grandmother, who made no show of extra longevity, lived down into my period, and had the benefit of my acquaintance through half a dozen years. If she turned this piece of good fortune to no great practical account, that (you know) was no fault of mine. Doubtless, I was ready with my advice, freely and gratuitously, if she had condescended to ask for it. Returning to my grandfather: the other distinguishing endowment, by which he was so favourably known and remembered amongst his friends, was the magical versatility of his talents, and his power of self-accommodation to all humours, tempers, and ages.

"Omnis Aristippum decuit color, et status, et res."

And in allusion to this line from Horace it was, that amongst his literary friends he was known familiarly by the name of Aristippus. His sons, Edward and Thomas, resembled him, by all accounts, in nothing; neither physically, nor in moral versatility. These two sons of the Squire, Edward and Thomas, through some traditional prejudice in the family, had always directed their views to the military profession. In such a case, the King's army is naturally that to which a young man's expectations turn. But to wait, and after all by possibility to wait in vain, did not suit my fiery grandfather. The interest which he could put into motion was

considerable; but it was more applicable to the service of the East India Company than to any branch of the Home Service. This interest was so exerted, that in one day he obtained a lieutenantcy in the Company's service for each of his sons. About 1780 or 1781, both young men, aged severally sixteen and seventeen years, went out to join their regiments —both regiments being on the Bengal establishment. Very different were their fates; yet their qualifications ought to have been the same, or differing only as sixteen differs from seventeen, and also as sixteen overflowing with levity differs from seventeen prematurely thoughtful. Edward Penson was early noticed for his high principle, for his benignity, and for a thoughtfulness somewhat sorrowful, that seemed to have caught in childhood some fugitive glimpse of his own too brief career. At noonday, in some part of Bengal, he went out of doors bareheaded, and died in a few hours.

In 1800-1801, my mother had become dissatisfied with Bath as a residence; and, being free from all ties connecting her with any one county of England rather than another, she resolved to traverse the most attractive parts of the island, and upon personal inspection to select a home; not a ready-built home, but the ground on which she might herself create one; for it happened that amongst the few infirmities besetting my mother's habits and constitution of mind was the costly one of seeking her chief intellectual excitement in architectural creations. She individually might be said to have built Greenhay; since to *her* views of domestic elegance and propriety my father had resigned *almost* everything. This was her *coup d'essai;* secondly, she built the complement to the Priory in Cheshire, which cost about £1000; thirdly, Westhay, in Somersetshire, about twelve miles from Bristol, which, including the land attached to the house, cost £12,500—not including subsequent additions; but this was built at the cost of my uncle; finally, Weston Lea, close to Bath, which, being designed simply for herself in old age, with a moderate establishment of four servants (and some reasonable provision of accommodations for a few visitors), cost originally, I believe, not more than £1000—excluding, however, the cost of all after alterations. It may serve to show how inevitably an amateur architect, without pro-

fessional aid and counsel, will be defrauded, that the first of these houses, which cost £6000, sold for no more than £2500, and the third for no more than £5000. The person who superintended the workmen, and had the whole practical management of one amongst these four houses, was a common builder, without capital or education, and the greatest knave that personally I have known. It may illustrate the way in which lady architects, without professional aid, are and ever will be defrauded, that, after all was finished, and the entire woodwork was to be measured and valued, each party, of course, needing to be represented by a professional agent, naturally the knavish builder was ready at earliest dawn with *his* agent; but, as regarded my mother's interest, the task of engaging such an agent had been confided to a neighbouring clergyman, "evangelical," of course, and a humble sycophant of Hannah More, but otherwise the most helpless of human beings—baptized or infidel. He contented himself with instructing a young gentleman, aged about fifteen, to take his pony and ride over to a distant cathedral town, which was honoured by the abode of a virtuous though drunken surveyor. This respectable drunkard he was to engage, and also with obvious discretion to fee, beforehand. All which was done: the drunken surveyor had a sort of fits, it was understood, that always towards sunset inclined him to assume the horizontal posture. Fortunately, however, for that part of mankind whom circumstances had brought under the necessity of communicating with him, these fits were intermitting; so that, for instance, in the present case, upon a severe call arising for his pocketing the fee of ten guineas, he astonished his whole household by suddenly standing bolt upright as stiff as a poker; his sister remarking to the young gentleman that he (the visitor) was in luck that evening: it wasn't everybody that could get that length in dealing with Mr. X. O. However, it is distressing to relate that the fits immediately returned; and, with that degree of exasperation which made it dangerous to suggest the idea of a receipt; since that must have required the vertical attitude. Whether that attitude ever was recovered by the unfortunate gentleman, I do not know. Forty-and-four years have passed since then. Almost

everybody connected with the case has had time to assume permanently the horizontal posture: viz., that knave of a builder, whose knaveries (gilded by that morning sun of June) were controlled by nobody—that sycophantish parson —that young gentleman of fifteen (now, alas! fifty-nine), who must long since have sown his wild oats—that unhappy pony of eighteen (now, alas! sixty-two, if living; ah! venerable pony, that must (or mustest) now require thy oats to be boiled)—in short, one and all of these venerabilities—knaves, ponies, drunkards, receipts—have descended, I believe, to chaos or to Hades, with hardly one exception. Chancery itself, though somewhat of an Indian juggler, could not play with such aërial balls as these.

On what ground it was that my mother quarrelled with the advantages of Bath, so many and so conspicuous, I cannot guess. At that time—viz., the opening of the nineteenth century—the old traditionary custom of the place had established for young and old the luxury of sedan-chairs. Nine-tenths, at least, of the colds and catarrhs, those initial stages of all pulmonary complaints (the capital scourge of England), are caught in the transit between the door of a carriage and the genial atmosphere of the drawing-room. By a sedan-chair all this danger was evaded; your two chairmen marched right into the hall: the hall-door was closed; and not until then was the roof and the door of your chair opened: the translation was—from one room to another. To my mother, and many in her situation, the sedan-chair recommended itself also by advantages of another class. Immediately on coming to Bath, her carriage was "laid up in ordinary." The trifling rent of a coach-house, some slight annual repairs, and the tax, composed the whole annual cost. At that time, and throughout the war, the usual estimate for the cost of a close carriage in London was £320: since, in order to have the certain services of two horses, it was indispensable to keep three. Add to this the coachman, the wear-and-tear of harness, and the duty; and, even in Bath, a cheaper place than London, you could not accomplish the total service under £270. Now, except the duty, all this expense was at once superseded by the sedan-chair—rarely costing you above ten shillings a week—*i.e.*, twenty-five guineas

a year, and liberating you from all care or anxiety. The duty on four wheels, it is true, was suddenly exalted by Mr. Pitt's triple assessment from twelve guineas to thirty-six: but what a trifle by comparison with the cost of horses and coachman! And then, no demands for money were ever met so cheerfully by my mother as those which went to support Mr. Pitt's policy against Jacobinism and Regicide. At present, after five years' sinecure existence, unless on the rare summons of a journey, this dormant carriage was suddenly undocked, and put into commission. Taking with her two servants, and one of my sisters, my mother now entered upon a *periplus*, or systematic circumnavigation of all England; and in England only, through the admirable machinery matured for such a purpose—viz., inns, innkeepers, servants, horses, all first-rate of their class—it was possible to pursue such a scheme in the midst of domestic comfort. My mother's resolution was to see all England with her own eyes, and to judge for herself upon the qualifications of each county, each town (not being a bustling seat of commerce), and each village (having any advantages of scenery), for contributing the main elements towards a home that might justify her in building a house. The qualifications insisted on were these five:—good medical advice somewhere in the neighbourhood; first-rate means of education; elegant (or what most people might think aristocratic) society; agreeable scenery: and so far the difficulty was not insuperable in the way of finding all the four advantages concentrated. But my mother insisted on a fifth, which in those days insured the instant shipwreck of the entire scheme: this was a Church of England parish clergyman, who was to be strictly orthodox, faithful to the articles of our English Church, yet to these articles as interpreted by evangelical divinity. My mother's views were precisely those of her friend Mrs. Hannah More, of Wilberforce, of Henry Thornton, of Zachary Macaulay (father of the historian), and generally of those who were then known amongst sneerers as "the Clapham saints." This one requisition it was on which the scheme foundered. And the fact merits recording, as an exposition of the broad religious difference between the England of that day and of this. At present, no difficulty would be found as to this fifth requisition.

"Evangelical" clergymen are now sown broadcast; at that period, there were not, on an average, above six or eight in each of the fifty-two counties.

The conditions, as a whole, were in fact incapable of being realized; where two or three were attained, three or two failed. It was too much to exact so many advantages from any one place, unless London; or really, if any other place could be looked to with hope in such a chase, that place was Bath,—the very city my mother was preparing to leave. Yet, had this been otherwise, and the prospect of success more promising, I have not a doubt that the pretty gem which suddenly was offered at a price unintelligibly low in the ancient city of Chester would have availed (as instantly it *did* avail, and perhaps ought to have availed) in obscuring those five conditions, of which else each separately for itself had seemed a *conditio sine quâ non.* This gem was an ancient house, on a miniature scale, called the *Priory;* and, until the dissolution of religious houses in the earlier half of the sixteenth century, had formed part of the Priory attached to the ancient Church (still flourishing) of St. John's. Towards the end of the sixteenth, and through the first quarter of the seventeenth century, this Priory had been in the occupation of Sir Robert Cotton, the antiquary, the friend of Ben Jonson, of Coke, of Selden, &c., and advantageously known as one of those who applied his legal and historical knowledge to the bending back into constitutional moulds of those despotic twists which new interests and false counsels had developed in the Tudor and Stuart dynasties. It was an exceedingly pretty place: and the kitchen, upon the ground storey, which had a noble groined ceiling of stone, indicated, by its disproportionate scale, the magnitude of the establishment to which once it had ministered. Attached to this splendid kitchen were tributary offices, &c. On the upper storey were exactly five rooms—viz., a servants' dormitory, meant in Sir Robert's day for two beds [1] at the

[1] The contrivance amongst our ancestors, even at haughty Cambridge and haughtier Oxford, was, that one bed rising six inches from the floor ran (in the day-time) under a loftier bed; it ran upon castors or little wheels. The learned word for a little wheel is *trochlea;* from which Grecian and Latin term comes the English word *truckle*-bed.

least, and a servants' sitting-room. These were shut off into a separate section, with a little staircase (like a ship's companion-ladder) and a little lobby of its own. But the principal section on this upper storey had been dedicated to the use of Sir Robert, and consisted of a pretty old hall, lighted by an old monastic-painted window in the door of entrance; secondly, a rather elegant dining-room; thirdly, a bedroom. The glory of the house internally lay in the monastic kitchen, and, secondly, in what a Frenchman would have called, properly, Sir Robert's own *apartment*[1] of three rooms; but, thirdly and chiefly, in a pile of ruined archways, most picturesque, so far as they went, but so small that Drury Lane could easily have found room for them on its stage. These stood in the miniature pleasure-ground, and were constantly resorted to by artists for specimens of architectural decays, or of nature working for the concealment of such decays by her ordinary processes of gorgeous floral vegetation. Ten rooms there may have been in the Priory, as offered to my mother for less than £500. A drawing-room, bedrooms, dressing-rooms, &c., making about ten more, were added by my mother for a sum under £1000. The same miniature scale was observed in all these additions. And, as the Priory was not within the walls of the city, whilst the river Dee, flowing immediately below, secured it from annoyance on one side, and the church, with its adjacent churchyard, insulated it from the tumults of life on all the other sides, an atmosphere of conventual stillness and tranquillity brooded over it and all around it for ever.

Such was the house, such was the society, in which I now found myself; and upon the whole I might describe myself as being, according to the modern phrase, "in a false position." I had, for instance, a vast superiority, as was to have been expected, in bookish attainments, and in adroitness of logic; whilst, on the other hand, I was ridiculously

[1] "*Apartment*":—Our English use of the word 'apartment" is absurd, since it leads to total misconceptions. We read in French memoirs innumerable of *the king's apartment*, of *the queen's apartment*, &c., and for us English the question arises, How? had the king, had her majesty, only one room? But, my friend, they might have a thousand rooms, and yet have only one apartment. An apartment means, in the continental use, a section or *compartment* of an edifice.

shortsighted or blind in all fields of ordinary human experience. It must not be supposed that I regarded my own particular points of superiority, or that I used them with any vanity or view to present advantages. On the contrary, I sickened over them, and laboured to defeat them. But in vain I sowed errors in my premises, or planted absurdities in my assumptions. Vainly I tried such blunders, as putting four terms into a syllogism, which, as all the world knows, ought to run on three ; a tripod it ought to be, by all rules known to man, and, behold, I forced it to become a quadruped. Upon my uncle's military haste and tumultuous energy in pressing his opinions, all such delicate refinements were absolutely thrown away. With disgust *I* saw, with disgust *he* saw, that too apparently the advantage lay with me in the result; and, whilst I worked like a dragon to place myself in the wrong, some fiend apparently so counterworked me that eternally I was reminded of the Manx halfpennies, which lately I had continually seen current in North Wales, bearing for their heraldic distinction three human legs in armour, but so placed in relation to each other, that always one leg is vertical and mounting guard on behalf of the other two, which, therefore, are enabled to sprawl aloft in the air—in fact, to be as absurdly negligent as they choose, relying upon their vigilant brother below, and upon the written legend or motto, STABIT QUOCUNQUE JECERIS (Stand it will upright, though you should fling it in any conceivable direction). What gave another feature of distraction and incoherency to my position was, that I still occupied the position of a reputed boy, nay, a child, in the estimate of my audience, and of a child in disgrace. Time enough had not passed since my elopement from school to win for me, in minds so fresh from that remembrance, a station of purification and assoilment. Oxford might avail to assoil me, and to throw into a distant retrospect my boyish trespasses ; but as yet Oxford had not arrived. I committed, besides, a great fault in taking often a tone of mock seriousness, when the detection of the playful extravagance was left to the discernment or quick sympathy of the hearer ; and I was blind to the fact, that neither my mother nor my uncle was distinguished by any natural

liveliness of vision for the comic, or any toleration for the extravagant. My mother, for example, had an awful sense of conscientious fidelity in the payment of taxes. Many a respectable family I have known that would privately have encouraged a smuggler, and, in consequence, were beset continually by mock smugglers, offering, with airs of affected mystery, home commodities liable to no custom-house objections whatsoever, only at a hyperbolical price. I remember even the case of a duke, who bought in Piccadilly, under laughable circumstances of complex disguise, some silk handkerchiefs, falsely pretending to be foreign, and was so incensed at finding himself to have been committing no breach of law whatever, but simply to have been paying double the ordinary shop price, that he pulled up the *soi-disant* smuggler to Bow Street, even at the certain price of exposure to himself. The charge he alleged against the man was the untenable one of *not* being a smuggler. My mother, on the contrary, pronounced all such attempts at cheating the king, or, as I less harshly termed it, cheating the tax-gatherer, as being equal in guilt to a fraud upon one's neighbour, or to direct appropriation of another man's purse. I, on my part, held, that Government, having often defrauded me through its agent and creature the Post-office, by monstrous overcharges on letters, had thus created in my behalf a right of retaliation. And dreadfully it annoyed my mother that I, stating this right in a very plausible rule-of-three form, viz., As is the income of the said fraudulent Government to my poor patrimonial income of £150 per annum, so is any one special fraud (as, for instance, that of yesterday morning, amounting to thirteenpence upon a single letter) to that equitable penalty which I am entitled to recover upon the goods and chattels (wherever found) of the ill-advised Britannic Government. During the war with Napoleon, the income of this Government ran, to all amounts, between fifty and seventy million pounds sterling. Awful, therefore, seemed the inheritance of retaliation, inexhaustible the fund of reprisals, into which I stepped,—since even a single case of robbery, such as I could plead by dozens, in the course of a few years, though no more than thirteenpence, yet, multiplied into seventy million times 240 pence, *minus*

£150, made a very comfortable property. The right was clear; and the sole difficulty lay in asserting it: in fact, that same difficulty which beset the philosopher of old, in arguing with the Emperor Hadrian, viz., the want of thirty legions for the purpose of clearly pointing out to Cæsar where it was that the truth lay,—the secret truth, that rarest of all "nuggets."

This counter-challenge of Government, as the first mover in a system of frauds, annoyed, but also perplexed my mother exceedingly. For an argument that shaped itself into a rule-of-three illustration seemed really to wear too candid an aspect for summary and absolute rejection.

Such discussions wore to me a comic shape. But altogether serious were the disputes upon INDIA—a topic on separate grounds equally interesting to us all, as the mightiest of English colonies, and the superbest monument of demoniac English energy, revealing itself in such men as Clive, Hastings, and soon after in the two Wellesleys. To my mother, as the grave of one brother, as the home of another, and as a new centre from which Christianity (she hoped) would mount like an eagle,—for just about that time the Bible Society was preparing its initial movements: whilst to my uncle India appeared as the *arena* upon which his activities were yet to find their adequate career. With respect to the Christianization of India, my uncle assumed a hope which he did not really feel; and in another point, more trying to himself personally, he had soon an opportunity for showing the sincerity of this deference to his spiritual-minded sister. For, very soon after his return to India, he received a civil appointment (*Superintendent of Military Buildings in Bengal*), highly lucrative; and the more so, as it could be held conjointly with his military rank; but a good deal of its pecuniary advantages was said to lie in fees, or perquisites, privately offered, but perfectly regular and official, which my mother (misunderstanding the Indian system) chose to call "bribes." A very ugly word was *that;* but I argued that even at home, even in the courts at Westminster, in the very fountains of justice, private fees constituted one part of the salaries—a fair and official part, so long as Parliament had not made such fees illegal by commuting them for

known and fixed equivalents. It was mere ignorance of India, as I dutifully insisted against "Mamma," that could confound these regular oriental "nuzzers" with the clandestine wages of corruption. The *pot-de-vin* of French tradition, the pair of gloves (though at one time very costly gloves) to an English judge of assize on certain occasions, never was offered nor received in the light of a bribe. And (until regularly abolished by the legislature) I insisted—but vainly insisted—that these and similar *honoraria* ought to be accepted, because else you were lowering the prescriptive rights and value of the office, which you—a mere *locum tenens* for some coming successor—had no right to do upon a solitary scruple or crotchet arising probably from dyspepsy. Better men, no doubt, than ever stood in *your* stockings, had pocketed thankfully the gifts of ancient, time-honoured custom. My uncle, however, though not with the carnal recusancy which besieged the spiritual efforts of poor Cuthbert Headrigg, that incorrigible worldling, yet still with intermitting doubts, followed my mother's earnest entreaties, and the more meritoriously (I conceive) as he yielded, in a point deeply affecting his interest, to a system of arguments very imperfectly convincing to his understanding. He held the office in question for as much (I believe) as eighteen or nineteen years; and by knowing old bilious Indians, who laughed immoderately at my uncle and my mother, as the proper growth of a priory or some such monastic establishment, I have been assured that nothing short of £200,000 ought, under the long tenure of office, to have been remitted to England. But then, said one of these gentlemen, if your uncle lived (as I have heard that he did) in Calcutta and Meerut at the rate of £4000 a year, *that* would account for a considerable share of a mine which else would seem to have been worked in vain. Unquestionably my uncle's system of living was under no circumstances a self-denying one. To enjoy, and to make others enjoy—*that* was his law of action. Indeed, a more liberal creature, or one of more princely munificence, never lived.

It might seem useless to call back any fragment of conversations relating to India which passed more than fifty years ago, were it not for two reasons; one of which is this,

that the errors (natural at that time) which I vehemently opposed, not from any greater knowledge that I had, but from closer reflection, are even now the prevailing errors of the English people. My mother, for instance, uniformly spoke of the English as the subverters of ancient thrones. I, on the contrary, insisted that nothing political was ancient in India. Our own original opponents, the Rajahs of Oude and Bengal, had been all upstarts: in the Mysore, again, our more recent opponents, Hyder and his son Tippoo, were new men altogether, whose grandfathers were quite unknown. Why was it that my mother, why is it that the English public at this day connect so false an image, that of high cloudy antiquity, with the thrones of India? It is simply from an old habit of associating the spirit of change and rapid revolution with the activities of Europe, so that, by a natural reaction of thought, the Orient is figured as the home of motionless monotony. In things religious, in habits, in costume, it *is* so. But so far otherwise in things political, that no instance can be alleged of any dynasty or system of government that has endured beyond a century or two in the East. Taking India in particular, the Mogul dynasty, established by Baber, the great-grandson of Timour, did not subsist in any vigour for two centuries; and yet this was by far the most durable of all established princely houses. Another argument against England, urged by my mother (but equally urged by the English people at this day), was, that she had in no eminent sense been a benefactress to India; or, expressing it in words of later date, that the only memorials of our rule, supposing us suddenly ejected from India, would be vast heaps of champagne bottles. I, on the other hand, alleged that our benefits, like all truly great and lasting benefits (religious benefits, for instance), must not be sought in external memorials of stone and masonry. Higher by far than the Mogul gifts of limestones, or travelling stations, or even roads and tanks, were the gifts of security, of peace, of law and settled order These blessings were travelling as fast as our rule advanced. I could not *then* appeal to the cases of Thuggee extirpated, of the Pindarees (full 15,000 bloody murderers) for ever exterminated, or of the Mahrattas bridled for ever—a robber

nation that previously had descended at intervals with a force of sometimes 150,000 troopers upon the afflicted province of Bengal, and Oude its neighbour; because these were events as yet unborn. But they were the natural extensions of that beneficent system on which I rested my argument.

The two terrors of India at that particular time were Holkar and Scindiah (pronounced *Sindy*), who were soon cut short in their career by the hostilities which they provoked with us, but would else have proved, in combination, a deadlier scourge to India than either Hyder or his ferocious son. My mother, in fact, a great reader of the poet Cowper, drew from *him* her notions of Anglo-Indian policy and its effects. Cowper, in his "Task," puts the question—

> "Is India free? and does she wear her plumed
> And jewell'd turban with a smile of peace,
> Or do we grind her still?"

Pretty much the same authority it is which the British public of this day has for its craze upon the subject of English oppression amongst the Hindoos.

My uncle, meantime, who from his Indian experience should reasonably have known so much better, was disposed, from the mere passive habits of hearing and reading unresistingly so many assaults of this tone against our Indian policy, to go along with my mother. But he was too just, when forced into reflection upon the subject, not to bend at times to my way of stating the case for England.

Suddenly, however, our Indian discussions were brought to a close by the following incident:—My uncle had brought with him to England some Arabian horses, and amongst them a beautiful young Persian mare, called Sumroo, the gentlest of her race. Sumroo it was that he happened to be riding, upon a frosty day. Unused to ice, she came down with him, and broke his right leg. This accident laid him up for a month, during which my mother and I read to him by turns. One book, which one day fell to my share by accident, was De Foe's "Memoirs of a Cavalier." This book attempts to give a picture of the Parliamentary War, but in some places an unfair, and everywhere a

most superficial account. I said so: and my uncle, who had an old craze in behalf of the book, opposed me with asperity; and in the course of what he said, under some movement of ill temper, he asked me, in a way which I felt to be taunting, how I could consent to waste my time as I did. Without any answering warmth, I explained that my guardians, having quarrelled with me, would not grant for my use anything beyond my school allowance of £100 per annum. But was it not possible that even this sum might by economy be made to meet the necessities of the case? I replied that, from what I had heard, very probably it was. Would I undertake an Oxford life upon such terms? Most gladly, I said. Upon that opening, he spoke to my mother; and the result was that, within seven days from the above conversation, I found myself entering that time-honoured University.

END OF VOL. I

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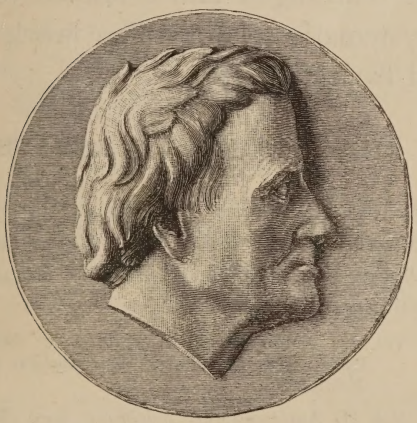

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